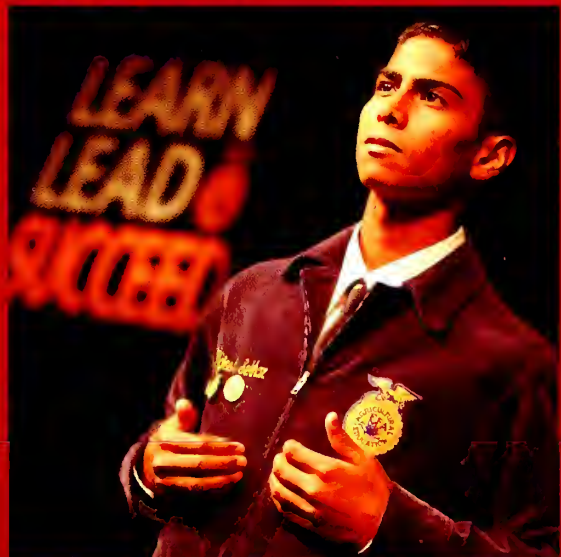


Proceedings



77TH NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION



Proceedings

NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION

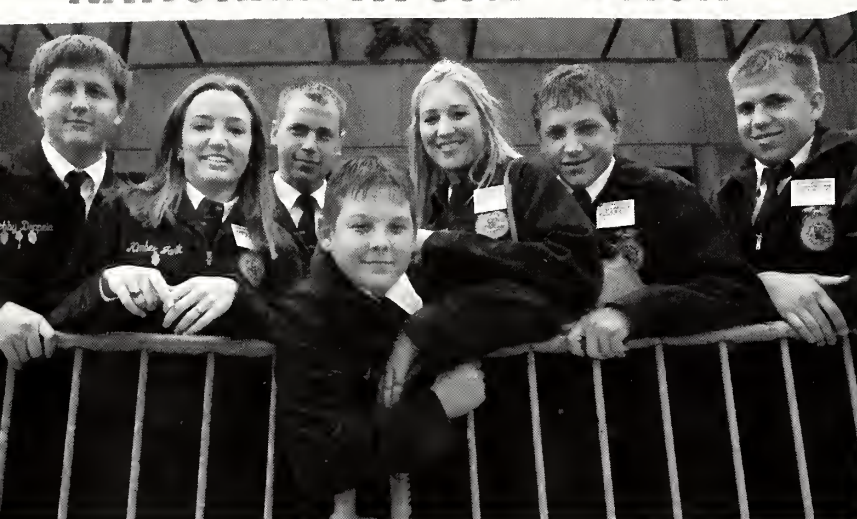


PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Convention allows FFA members to make friends from across the nation.



The 77th National FFA Convention **Proceedings** is published by the National FFA Organization as a record of its annual convention held in Louisville, Ky.

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Learn, Lead, Succeed

With eagerness and excitement, more than 50,000 FFA members, advisors and guests from across the country made their way to Louisville, Ky., Oct. 27-30 for the 77th National FFA Convention. The week was action-packed, filled with everything from convention sessions to career development events. The 2004 National FFA Convention officially kicked off Wednesday, when members watched the 2003-2004 National FFA Officers enthusiastically enter the first convention session to the tune of Jennifer Lopez's "Let's Get Loud." After four days of blue and gold jackets swarming the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, convention came to a close Saturday afternoon when the new national officer team was installed. But, in the midst of all the happenings, FFA members found one common purpose at national convention—Learn, Lead, Succeed.

Learn

Throughout convention, FFA members had multiple opportunities for learning — one of the foundations of FFA and agricultural education. Students learned from the experiences and inspiring stories of this year's keynote speakers, including former Washington Redskins quarterback Joe Theismann and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, who brought a message from President George W. Bush.

"Your organization plays an important role in shaping our future," Veneman read from



Members at opening day of the convention.



Many members took in the sites of beautiful downtown Louisville.

Learn, Lead, Succeed

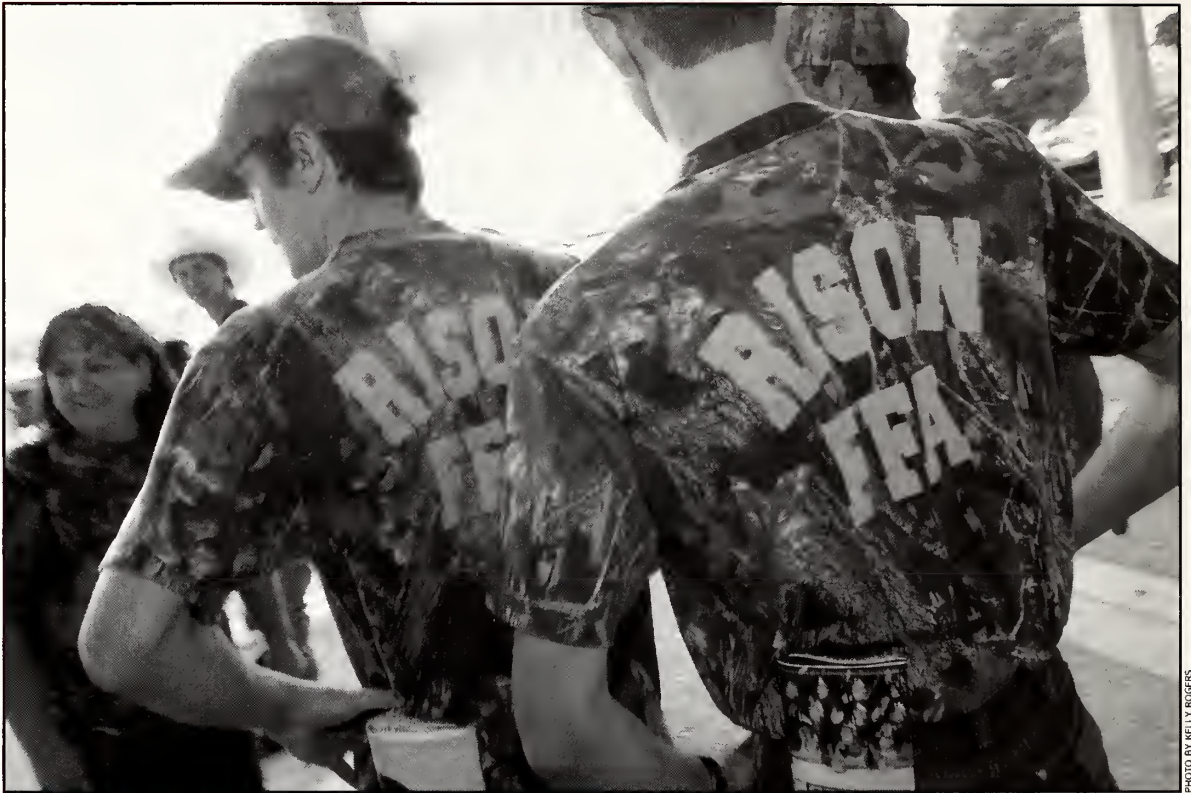


PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

FFA members show pride in their local communities.



PHOTO BY SAM HANDEL

Bush's letter. "Your commitment to excellence can strengthen our nation."

Theismann, the NFL's 1983 Most Valuable Player, recounted his days as a professional football player and shared with FFA members how they can learn from challenges and obstacles they face.

"Don't fight change," Theismann told a crowd of 38,000. "Embrace it. Find out what you can get from it."

In addition to garnering wisdom from convention speakers, FFA members attended student development workshops hosted by former national FFA officers and other presenters. This year's lineup, featuring 17 workshops, included a memory-building session, a class that focused on personal mission statements and other topics related to student development.

One of the annual convention highlights, the National FFA Agricultural Career Show, allowed FFA members to

Learn, Lead, Succeed

learn more about the agricultural industry and careers in agriculture.

"The career fair shows you how much agriculture has an influence on everything," said Minnesota FFA member Geoff Gerardin, who said he was impressed by his first trip to convention.

Students continuously packed the South Wing of Freedom Hall, so they could browse more than 340 exhibits and talk to company representatives. Whether trying Spam for the first time, visiting the Army's climbing wall or talking with university representatives, the career show was a chance for FFA members to have fun while learning about the agriculture industry.

Lead

In terms of leadership, FFA members showed why the National FFA Organization is the nation's premier youth leadership organization. In fact, before convention began, FFA delegates from all 50 states and Puerto Rico spent two days discussing issues relating to the organization and possible changes to the FFA constitution. The delegate body – as always – was a vital part of national convention. Delegates sat on the floor level of the convention hall and helped energize the crowd before sessions began.

Sessions, which were full of events that displayed FFA leadership, were a huge hit with FFA members. Thousands of

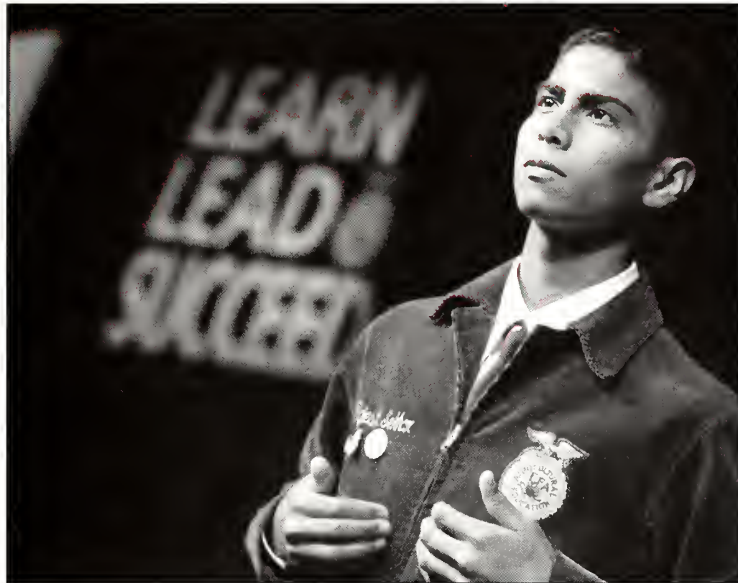


PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Leadership skills gained in local chapters are displayed on a national stage during convention.



PHOTO BY SAM HARRIS

Information taken from the FFA National Agricultural Career Show helps students find their calling.

Learn, Lead, Succeed



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

National convention is the place where much time and energy turns into success.

blue-jacketed students began pouring into the seats of Freedom Hall about an hour before each session. Students were treated to music by the National FFA Band and Chorus, including the band's movie medley and the chorus' powerful a cappella version of the national anthem. National FFA Advisor Dr. Larry Case developed a rapport with students at the opening session as he led them in chants of "learn, lead, succeed." By the end of the week, thousands of students cheered for Dr. Case during opening ceremonies and encouraged him "raise-the-roof" for FFA. Also, the 2003-2004 National Officers gave powerful retiring addresses that drew praise and applause from the entire convention hall.

"The national officers actually tell stories you can relate to," said Heather Wiilk, a student from Cumberland FFA in Wisconsin.

The officers – Javier Moreno, Christy

Windham, Casey Hogan, Stacia Berry, Ann Knapke and Amy Rasmussen – shared life lessons that have shaped them into the leaders they are today. Last, ensuring that the tradition of FFA premier leadership continues, the newly chosen 2004-2005 National Officers were installed at the final convention session Saturday afternoon.

Succeed

For thousands of FFA members, national convention is the place where much time and energy turns into success. FFA members from every state came to convention not just for the purpose of attending sessions and listening to speakers but to participate in a career development event (CDE) or present a project in hopes of winning one of many FFA awards. The West Wing of Freedom Hall, where most CDEs took place, was abuzz with activity. FFA members and

Learn, Lead, Succeed

advisors formed long lines in the West Wing lobby, waiting to take pictures with event sponsors. One FFA advisor, standing with her farm business management team Wednesday morning, said participation in FFA events can lead to future success and is “an opportunity of a lifetime.” Finalists were chosen for each CDE, and winners were recognized onstage.

Students also came to convention hoping to walk away with a prestigious FFA award, such as the American Star Farmer or the Agriscience Student of the Year.

All the award finalists demonstrated innovation and a drive to succeed. The Stars Over America Pageant was an example of how FFA members take classroom principles and turn them into real-world successes. Even though FFA members often compete against one another at convention, there is a common FFA bond among them that was present throughout convention.

“National Convention is more than just coming here to compete,” Puerto Rico FFA member José Lozada said. “We’re all united. We’re one organization.”

In the end, the 77th National FFA Convention was a spectacular event, where students from all over came together to learn, lead and succeed. After all – like National FFA President Javier Moreno said – “that’s what FFA is all about.”



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Students learn the satisfaction that comes from hard work and dedication as they're recognized for their achievements.



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

FFA Advisors and mentors are fundamental in guiding FFA members to success.

Stars Over America



On Thursday evening, 16 FFA members were honored for their years of hard work and dedication as finalists for the Stars Over America awards. The awards recognize outstanding achievements in supervised agricultural experience programs (SAEs) through proven agricultural competencies, remarkable management skills

and other academic and leadership requirements.

The student SAE programs led them to apply for and earn the American FFA Degree, in which a student must earn and invest \$7,500 in a self-chosen career field or work more than 1,500 hours in job placement.

Each winner is awarded \$2,000

and a plaque. Each finalist receives \$1,000 from the National FFA Foundation and has the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica. Only one in each of the four areas emerges from the interviews as a Star: Star Farmer, Star in Agribusiness, Star in Agricultural Placement and Star in Agriscience.

Star Farmers



ALL STARS OVER AMERICA PHOTOS BY ED ZURIGA

William A. Erdenberger
River Ridge FFA
Glen Haven, Wisconsin

William Erdenberger began his farming operation when he was only six years old. In partnership with his brother, he bought four calves and raised them to weaning age. He worked for his brother and dad in exchange for feed. Today, Erdenberger's 850-acre farm focuses on raising cattle and hogs, as well as growing corn and soybeans. He is responsible for making most of the decisions, including the number of animals fed, the vaccination programs used and feed rations. Erdenberger also assists in coordinating the marketing of the herd.



Lynn Ranae Rohrscheib
Jamaica FFA
Fairmount, Illinois

At the age of nine, Rohrscheib began growing a small plot of corn that she exhibited at the Illinois State Fair. As she grew older, her interest in agriculture also grew leading to partnerships with her grandfather from whom she rented 393 acres and planted corn, soybeans, oats and food corn. When her family took over a 900-acre operation from a local farmer, Rohrscheib and her sister were offered a 25 percent partnership. She hopes that someday she will be able to further expand and have a farm operation of her own.



Shanna M. Krull
Wawasee FFA
Milford, Indiana

Shanna Krull has been involved in the swine industry for most of her life. At the age of nine, she began her own swine operation when she purchased two hogs from her father. She currently owns more than 50 hogs and has raised approximately 700 feeder pigs over the past six years. To publicize her swine operation, Krull organized a series of workshops for members in her county to teach them about ear notching, pig selection and showmanship.



Justin S. Ohlde
Linn FFA
Linn, Kansas

As Justin S. Ohlde was growing up, he realized that in order to be a successful farmer he had to gain as much knowledge as he could in an attempt to keep veterinary costs low. He took a course in artificial insemination and can now breed and infuse his own cattle. Today, Ohlde's Dairy is a 2,100-acre dairy farm that milks approximately 600 cows, in addition to growing harvest crops and forages.

Stars Over America

Star in Agribusiness



Travis Vine
Neillsville FFA
Granton, Wisconsin

What started out as mere tinkering with an old motorcycle in his parents' garage has grown into a lucrative business for Travis Vine. He is the owner and operator of TCR Power Products where he repairs a variety of small engines including chain saws, all-terrain vehicles, small tractors, feed carts, bale choppers, motorcycles and snowmobiles.

When his clientele grew to more than 250 customers, Vine expanded his business and moved from his parent's garage to a new location in downtown Neillsville, Wis.



Brad Cook
Eaton FFA
Eaton, Colorado

Brad Cook has farmed his entire life. In fact, when he was just four years old, he claims he used to tell his dad what needed to be done next on the Eaton, Colo., family farm. By the age of eight he was behind the wheel of the tractor doing simple jobs. Cook's love for and understanding of farming led him to develop his own custom business five years ago, when a family friend asked him to help out with his custom hay-cutting operation. One year later, Cook was cutting hay for ten different farmers and doubled that number the following year. Currently, his clientele has increased to 40 customers and he has added a baling service.



Kenton Abrams
Oldham County FFA
Buckner, Kentucky

Kenton Abrams started his own lawn care business before he started high school. Today, the 20-year-old owns and operates his own landscape business, Kenton Abrams Landscaping and Wholesale Nursery in Buckner, Ky. The company concentrates on landscaping, landscape maintenance, leaf and snow removal, landscape construction and the production of plants for business use and sale to other landscapers.

"I love working with people..." explains Abrams, "...learning their likes and dislikes and then designing and installing the best possible landscape for them within their budget."



Jana LeAnn Thies
Glasgow FFA
Glasgow, Missouri

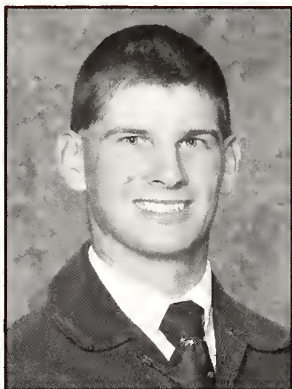
Jana Thies dreamed of becoming a successful female agribusiness owner. She has realized that dream through her fruit and vegetable retail operation. Thies began her program by acquiring land through lease agreements with several individuals near her home. This allowed her to use vacant garden sites in exchange for a share of the production and general maintenance on the land. She has now expanded into five markets, seven acres of land and a greenhouse. Since 1998 she has successfully produced and marketed 80 different kinds of vegetables, fruits and plants.



Stars Over America



Stars in Agricultural Placement



Miles Justin Kuschel
Sebekka FFA
Sebekka, Minnesota

Miles Kuschel started helping on his family's ranch when he was young. Today, Kuschel's placement is on the Rocking K Ranch, which is a rotational-grazing based beef cow/calf operation with more than 5,000 acres. The ranch has 900 cattle and 15 horses. Kuschel began working on the ranch doing various tasks from raking hay to feeding calves and cows. He is now in charge of the day-to-day operations, including breaking in new horses, pulling calves and overseeing the animal health program.



Weston Michael
Chino Valley FFA
Chino Valley, Arizona

Weston Michael of Chino Valley, Arz., became involved in the field of agricultural mechanics at the young age of five. He began working for his father at Michael and Son's Enterprises, a large fabrication shop, cleaning and emptying the trash to earn his allowance. As his experience grew, he began working in the paint and finish room, along with maintaining his duties as a welder. He now has the ability to design custom pieces of steel and cut it for new equipment. He is also learning essential information to become a partner in the business. Aside from working at the fabrication shop, the 21-year-old also manages a registered herd of Black Angus heifers and bulls that are utilized as part of a club calf-breeding program that is operated on 200 acres.



Mark Thiel
Rugby FFA
Rugby, North Dakota

Mark Thiel has been helping out with his family's business for as long as he can remember. Thiel Feedlots has been in operation since 1983. It spans 80 acres, having maximum capacity to hold 2,000 head of cattle. They custom feed the cattle during the fall, winter and spring months. The 21-year-old's duties on the farm include developing feed rations, operating equipment, feed grinding and machine maintenance and repair. Thiel has broadened his knowledge of agriculture by enrolling in courses such as plant and soil sciences, livestock production and vet science at Bismark State College.

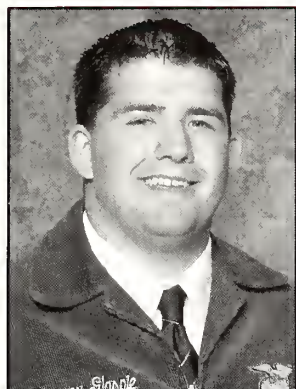


Jacob Smith
Warren County FFA
McMinnville, Tennessee

Being born as a fourth generation farmer, it was obvious to Jacob Smith from the start that he would have an active role on the McMinnville, Tenn., family farm. In fact, he has been an employee at Smith Farms and Logging since he was a young boy. When he began, the 21-year-old Warren County FFA member performed daily feeding chores and assisted with the logging. As he got older, his responsibilities grew, and he now serves as the farm manager. He operates equipment, manages facilities and supplies, all while managing his own 98 head herd of beef cattle. To accommodate this herd, Smith purchased 70 acres upon graduation from high school.

Stars Over America

Stars in Agriscience



Patrick Jeremy Glaspie
Springport FFA
Springport, Michigan

Jeremy Glaspie's interest in agricultural science and research began when he was asked by his FFA advisor to help manage a newly-built greenhouse for growing hydroponic tomatoes. Two years later, after learning different research methods through trial and error, Glaspie and the other students were able to produce a reliable crop. Glaspie also served as an undergraduate research technician at Michigan State University, where he has broadened his studies to several different kinds of plants including zucchini, carrots, eggplant and watermelons. As a technician, he was responsible for chemical application, field preparation, research plot design and data collection.



Christopher Nelson
West Central FFA
Menlo, Iowa

Growing up and working on his family's farm, Nelson has spent his entire life producing corn, soybeans and hay. This farming experience has served as a base for his research and the farm itself as the subject. Nelson conducted three separate projects over the course of three years: he tested the feasibility of utilizing soil bacterium to enhance the growth of maize, analyzed the nutrient value and effect of ground hay on beef cattle production, and studied the effects of feeding soybean silage to cattle as a forage crop. His research has been featured in numerous agricultural publications including Iowa Farmer Today and Farm Show Magazine. He has also been recognized on several websites and on *Paul Harvey's National News*.



Yarimar Lebrón López
S.U. Manuel Mendia Moret FFA
Patillas, Puerto Rico

Yarimar Lebrón López wanted to do something that would benefit the farmers of Puerto Rico. The 21-year-old Patillas, Puerto Rico, native developed a three-year research program, investigating the different areas of raising beef cattle in Puerto Rico. She studied six different cattle herds within the country, each having around 45 to 50 head and consisting of various breeds. Her goal was to determine the growth rate of the cattle in different parts of the country. Lebrón López tested her research through ground analysis, grass analysis for pasturing and cattle's blood analysis. Through her research, she was able to determine that the beef cattle on the coasts area were bigger and fatter than those raised in the mountainous areas.



Dana Tackes
Stratford FFA
Edgar, Wisconsin

Tackes interest in science and research began during her senior year at Stratford High School when she took part in a health career co-op program. Through this program, she spent two hours a day job-shadowing various medical careers. Much to her surprise, she found that she enjoyed the time she spent in the research and testing labs the most.

When Tackes became a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she wanted to continue to develop her research interests and did so by working in an immunology lab in the Department of Animal Health and Biomedical Sciences. In the immunology lab, Tackes has the opportunity to work on several different research projects, including ones dealing with the bovine herpes virus and *Brucella* bacteria.



Agri-Entrepreneurship Awards



Sponsored by the National FFA Foundation.



PHOTO BY ED ZURIGA

The convention theme – *Learn, Lead, Succeed* – was present throughout the week at all contests and events. Before national convention, however, these principles are a crucial part of FFA programs, especially the agri-entrepreneurship program. To participate, FFA members must submit an agriculture-related business plan. These students – many of whom will become future leaders in the agriculture industry – invest time and resources into learning about their respective businesses so their operations can be successful.

At the convention, 10 national winners were recognized on stage at the fifth general session Friday morning. Each national winner receives a \$1,000 scholarship and a plaque. The agri-entrepreneurship program is a joint venture of the National FFA Organization and the U.S.D.A. Rural Development Agency.

Tyler Benish of Hillsboro, Wis., owns and operates Greenboro Driving Range. Benish opened the driving range after his search for a golf-related job for his SAE was unsuccessful. Benish surveyed other golfers in Hillsboro and nearby communities and established the range so that golfers would not have to make a 25-mile trip to the nearest facility in order to practice. Tyler invested \$2,000 of his own money into the endeavor. After starting his business, he made use of other people's talents and skills, and learned from them how to improve his advertising and how to better promote his business.

Eric Bragg of Thetford Center, Vt., owns and operates the Watch'em Grow Fish Hatchery. An avid outdoorsman, Bragg has built his passion into a business. Bragg supplies live rainbow, brook and brown trout between eight and 10 inches in length to local pond owners and fishermen who want a body of water stocked with trout. Since his customers plan to catch the product for consumption, Bragg pays special attention to management practices that impact taste, including types of feed, tank cleanliness and waste management practices.

Kelly Brown of Randolph, Wis., is the owner and operator of Shemorlla Farms Llama Sales. An animal enthusiast, Brown owned a couple of llamas when she enrolled in her first agriculture course. Brown knew that there were several llama shows around her state every year where people trade and sell llama fleece and llama fleece products and decided to tap into the market with her own llamas. Her primary customers are members of the Wisconsin Llama Association. She was soon able to expand her small herd to increase her cash flow, which she hopes will help offset the costs of college tuition.

Carol Cook of Bennington, Okla., owns and operates Heulyn Pembroke, a business that sells high-quality Welsh corgi puppies. After visiting a kennel at the age of 10, she set her sites on starting a breeding business. She applied for and received a Farm Service Agency Rural Youth Loan and bought seven Pembroke Welsh corgi puppies in August of 2002 and sold her first litter of pups in June of 2003. Cook has always been very active in FFA, serving as a chapter officer, participating in public speaking competitions, chairing the Food For America project and attending various camps and conferences.

Tony Crescio of Randolph, Wis., owns and operates Tony's Organic Scents. The idea for the enterprise came when Crescio got his driver's license. One of the first things he did was purchase an air freshener for his car. He soon realized that the scent didn't last long after the package was opened, and he had to buy another and another. Inspiration struck when one of his friends visited his family's farm on a day they were distilling peppermint oil. The friend remarked on how nice it smelled; Crescio decided to put a few drops of the oil on old air freshener and hang it in his car. Most of his passengers loved the new scent and Crescio knew he had found a marketable product. In addition to air fresheners for cars, he is also making candles and is working on other products that will freshen large rooms.

Kaylee Kramer of Sutton, Neb., owns and operates Kramer's Weed Wiping, a business that wipes weeds with herbicide in soybean and

grain sorghum fields. Before she invested in the equipment needed to start this business, she researched the potential acres of crops in her area to make sure the investment would pay off. One of Kramer's goals was to become financially independent from her parents. When she started her business, she was forced to borrow the funds needed to purchase the equipment. After only one year of business, she was able to pay off the loan and has continued to receive enough cash flow to keep the company running smoothly for the past four years.

Levi Long of Troy, Ohio, owns and operates Long's Lawn Care, a business that offers complete commercial and residential landscaping services. Long offers a variety of lawn care services to his customers from mulching and edging flower beds to lawn and gutter clean-up. His business has remained steady due to an increase in the number of houses being built in his area. Many community members ask for help from his company in maintaining their new lawns. After he graduates from high school he plans to grow along with his business by enrolling in several landscaping and plant identification courses at his local community college.

Keenan Rogerson of Bakersfield, Calif., owns and operates Living Tree Poinsettia, a business that creates and sells Christmas ornaments featuring living poinsettias. Rogerson's FFA chapter sells six-inch poinsettias as a Christmas-time fundraiser. Incidentally, he learned how to make antiseptic growing media for plant tissue culturing in his biotechnology class at roughly the same time. He put the two activities together and started growing miniature poinsettias in clear, round Christmas tree ornament bulbs. The plants grow as each day passes, bringing a new look to the ornament throughout the season. After the holidays, the plants can be transplanted to a pot and appreciated throughout the year. Rogerson is working to fine-tune his production line in order to accommodate a likely increase in customers this year.

Mike Schmidt of Fox Lake, Wis., owns and operates Manure LLC in conjunction with his parents. Manure LLC offers manure pumping and application services to dairy and hog farmers within a 40-mile radius of Schmidt's town. He became interested in the business after realizing how much time his family lost in getting crops planted when they had to wait to have their manure pit pumped in the spring. When his parents purchased the manure-handling business Schmidt purchased 10 percent of the business himself. He has since increased his equity to 20 percent. Schmidt understands that time management is critical in his business. He works hard to provide prompt service to his customers.

Kyle Seyfert of Lebanon, Pa., owns and operates Seyfert's Corn Maze. The corn maze offers three basic features: entertainment, retail sales of ornamental decorations such as pumpkins, straw and corn, and refreshment sales. His idea to develop the maze was inspired by a school field trip to a corn maze in another county, and his need to raise money for his college education. He saw great potential in the profitability of a corn maze, since there would be very little competition in his own county. He was able to corner a niche market in the agri-entertainment sector of our community and draws crowds by offering group discounts and hayrides.

Prepared Public Speaking CDE

Sponsored by Arvesta Corporation, New Dominion Management and the National FFA Foundation.

Aaron Preston Branch Area Career Center Michigan



A mixture of nerves, intensity, enthusiasm and talent made up this year's prepared public speaking career development event (CDE). The event, which began Wednesday morning, featured 46 FFA members who came to convention ready to present their polished, well-rehearsed speeches. Participants, who were often found outside contest rooms putting last-minute touches on their speech delivery, spoke on topics ranging from agricultural public policy to changes in the agricultural industry. Speakers showed their creativity by using a variety of introductions – such as songs, statistics and the FFA Creed – to try to captivate the audience from the start.

At the end of each speech, contestants fielded questions from six judges, often requiring speakers to think on their feet and show an in-depth knowledge of the topic in which they invested many hours. The top four finalists made it through the first two rounds and competed in the final competition Thursday morning. This year's finalists were Kaitlin Spak of California, Aaron Preston of Michigan, Laila Hajji of Oklahoma and Emily Kuecker of South Dakota.

Aaron Preston won the 2004 National FFA Prepared Public Speaking CDE. He competed against three other finalists for the title. His speech, "Is COOL really that cool?" explains the impact country of origin labeling (COOL) may have on the U.S. agriculture industry. Below is an excerpt from his speech.

"Ladies and Gentlemen: how many of you are wearing clothes that were made in the USA? I'm surely not! These pants were made in China, my shirt in Taiwan, and even my FFA jacket in Vietnam. Obviously, most of us don't care about where our clothes are made. Are we any more concerned about the food we eat, or perhaps the food our children eat? Many people believe that what we eat does matter, so they are looking for country of origin labeling, or COOL, to improve their confidence in food safety and spark U.S. farm markets. Yet, at the same time, COOL could cost farmers millions of dollars each year to implement and maintain, along with adding immeasurable amounts of stress. So today I ask you, is country of origin labeling really that cool?"

"... Ultimately, the success of COOL lies at the level of consumption. If consumers are willing to pay an extra premium for



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

U.S. grown products, then COOL will succeed. If they are not, COOL will fail. Personally, I believe in the future of agriculture, because regardless of our involvement in the agriculture industry, we are all consumers, and as such, we each have a voice. FFA members, I urge you not to let your voice go unheard. This is the time to form partnerships with grocery stores, restaurants, and food service industries, in order to persuade key players to support American agriculture products. In our communities, we need to exercise the power of the dollar. Make a conscious decision to buy American grown products."

"Whether you like what COOL has to offer or not, country of origin labeling is a part of our future. Ladies and gentlemen, please remember that in order for COOL to be cool, we must choose American grown."

A full copy of Preston's speech will be available through The Core catalog in February, 2005.

Creed Speaking CDE

Sponsored by CHS and the National FFA Foundation.



Elizabeth Mulkey won the National FFA Creed Speaking CDE with her excellent speaking skills and her understanding of the FFA Creed.

Elizabeth Mulkey Hutto Middle School Georgia

"I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words, but of deeds..."

The Creed was written by E.M. Tiffany and adopted at the 3rd National Convention of the FFA. Today it is still a very powerful piece of FFA tradition, and it conjures up many memories for most FFA members.

The creed speaking CDE provides new members (grades 7-9 grades with an opportunity to gain experience in public speaking as well as develop an enriched understanding of its importance to FFA.

This year's winner was Elizabeth Mulkey of Hutto Middle School, Georgia. She was one of 47 members participating in the event.



Extemporaneous Public Speaking CDE

*Sponsored by American Farm
Bureau Federation*

Extemporaneous public speaking is the perfect CDE for FFA members who are quick in their thought and smooth with their words. In the extemporaneous public speaking event, students are given 30 minutes to prepare a four- to six- minute speech on an agricultural topic. Then, the competitors are asked to answer a series of questions from the judges.

This year's winner was Laura Hogan from Louisiana.



PHOTO BY SARA HARREL

Laura Hogan's ability to think fast on her feet earned her the honor of extemporaneous public speaking CDE winner.

Laura Hogan **Choudrant FFA Chapter** **Louisiana**

This year's National FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking CDE winner was Laura Hogan of Choudrant FFA Chapter in Louisiana. Her topic was "Balancing Farmland Preservation with the Right to Sell Land." In her speech Logan stated, "As the public we are responsible for ensuring that our farmland is being preserved, by ensuring that our government makes it a top priority, and that's being done. I believe in the preservation of one of our country's greatest assets. I believe in the public's responsibility to ensure that our farmlands are being preserved. And I believe that our government will support agriculture and preserve one of our country's masterpieces. This land is your land, this land is my land—Do we value it? Do we appreciate it? Is it being used for its full value? I think so."

Agriscience Student Recognition Program



Sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



PHOTO BY SANTI HARREL

Hard work and diligent research paid off for Paul Ruddle as he was named 2004 Agriscience Student of the Year.

Georgia FFA member Paul Ruddle's hard work studying plants and photosynthesis over the past four years paid off at national convention. During one of the Thursday sessions, Ruddle, a member of Lowndes High FFA Chapter, was named the 2004 Agriscience Student of the Year. Using technology and science, Ruddle conducted a plant study to determine if there was a difference in the photosynthesis rates of genetically altered plants and unaltered plants.

Through his research, Ruddle concluded that genetically altered plants and non-altered plants have the same rate of photosynthesis. Ruddle's interest in plant genetics began when he was a middle school FFA member.

"Back in seventh grade, my ag advisor suggested I do a speech on

genetically engineered plants," he said.

Ruddle plans to attend college and study plant genetics. For other members considering an agriscience project, Ruddle recommends getting involved with some type of agricultural research.

Ruddle is an example of how FFA members develop real-world career skills through integrated agricultural education. The Agriscience Student Scholarship and Recognition program is sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. Eligible FFA members are selected on the basis of research projects involving agriscience skills.

The 2004 Agriscience Student of the Year Runner Up was Robert Bialozynski of the Pulaski FFA Chapter in Wisconsin.

National Winner

Paul Ruddle II

Lowndes HS-FFA

Georgia

FFA Advisor: James Corbett

Runner-up

Robert Bialozynski

Pulaski HS-FFA

Wisconsin

FFA Advisor: Jared Schaffner

National Finalists

Jennifer Becnel

St. James HS-FFA

Louisiana

FFA Advisor: Felix Landry

Brittany Carlson

Sumner HS-FFA

Washington

FFA Advisor: Greg Pile

Leann Little

Clarkrange HS FFA

Tennessee

FFA Advisor: Lee Little

Michael Maw

Tift Co HS-FFA

Georgia

FFA Advisor: Lynne Cook

Chance Simpson

Timberlake HS-FFA

Oklahoma

FFA Advisor: Jed Lamle

Hannah von der Hoff

Agricultural & Food Sciences Academy

Minnesota

FFA Advisor: Carl Aakre

Agriscience Teacher of the Year

Sponsored by PotashCorp as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

For making science come to life for students, Kimberley Ann Miller of California earned the honor of 2004 Agriscience Teacher of the Year. At Mission Viejo High School in Ladera Ranch, Calif., Miller took over a neglected agricultural program and began teaching students that agriculture and science are dependent upon each other. As part of her curriculum, Miller implemented a skills training program, where students work at internships or regular jobs that help them realize the real-life applications of concepts learned in class. Her efforts to combine state science and agriculture standards resulted in approval of a four-year Agriscience Academy. Over the past two years, the school's agriculture department has increased from 84 to 223 students. Her selection was announced in an onstage presentation during Friday's seventh general session, and she was awarded a personal plaque, a plaque for her school and a \$1,500 cash award.

The Agriscience Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding agriculture teachers who emphasize technology in their curriculum and bring standards of excellence to the agriscience classroom and FFA activities. The program is sponsored by PotashCorp as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

National Winner

Kimberley Miller
Mission Viejo HS-FFA
Mission Viejo, CA
Administrator: Marilyn McDowell

National Finalists

Eric Larsen
Oconto Falls HS-FFA
Oconto Falls, WI
Administrator: Bruce Russell

Teresa Lindberg
E.W. Wyatt Middle School-FFA
Emporia, VA
Administrator: Donald Bullock

Maxson Sherman
Tillamook HS-FFA
Tillamook, OR
Administrator: Bruce Rhodes



Kimberley Miller's dedication to her students and belief in the value of skills gained through agricultural education resulted in her being named 2004 Agriscience Teacher of the Year.



Agriscience Fair

Sponsored by Ford Motor Company as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Participation in the agriscience fair provides FFA members with the opportunity to be innovative while exploring new possibilities in agriculture.

"The fair gives people a whole new look at agriculture," said Chelsea Holland, an agriscience fair participant from Heritage FFA in Washington.

FFA members begin developing projects months before national convention and advance through local and state fairs before reaching the national level. This year's projects displayed the diverse work and research of FFA members in areas such as crop production, animal production, horticulture and biotechnology. More than 250 projects were on display at the back of the convention career show and were judged Thursday morning. Contestants stood by their display boards – which varied in design, color and style – and answered questions from judges who circulated the room. Through the question-and-answer time, students showed judges what they have learned through their projects. Many FFA members believe their experiences will serve them well in the future.

Category: Biochemistry/Microbiology/Food Science
Division 1: Sean Galloway - Alamogordo, NM
Division 2: Jacqueline Fenn - Chicago, IL
Division 3: Caitlin Frederick and Amber Krause - Florence, TX
Division 4: Dustin Crittenden and Kyle Baker - Winfield, KS

Category: Botany
Division 1: Ryan Thoroman - Beardstown, IL
Division 2: Adam Judy - Moorefield, WV
Division 3: Michele Goodfellow and Jenna Pham - Homestead, FL
Division 4: Kristi Brown and Bridget Sloan - Delavan, IL

Category: Engineering
Division 1: Angela Garcia - San Antonio, TX
Division 2: Cassie Sanders - Mansfield, MO
Division 3: Colin Anderson and Molly McGinnity - Little Canada, MN
Division 4: Phil Bahr and Jeremiah Satterthwaite - Little Canada, MN

Category: Environmental Sciences
Division 1: Michael Fosdick - Mediapolis, IA
Division 2: Tyler Gary - Arcadia, FL
Division 3: Mallory Schon and Rachel Caraher - Glidden, IA
Division 4: Elizabeth Hoff and Emily Nygaard - Halstad, MN

Category: Zoology
Division 1: Emily Arkfeld - Nebraska City, NE
Division 2: Stephen Fuchs - Cameron, TX
Division 3: Cassandra Lemus and Brandi Hodge - Homestead, FL
Division 4: Katy Bradley and Kristen Lubbeck - Concord, NC

H.O. Sargent Awards



Sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The H.O. Sargent Awards are given annually to individuals who develop ways to reach underrepresented groups in order to bring them the experience of agricultural education and FFA.

Jonathon Goff, a member of the Tampa Bay Tech Senior FFA Chapter in Tampa, Fla., was pre-

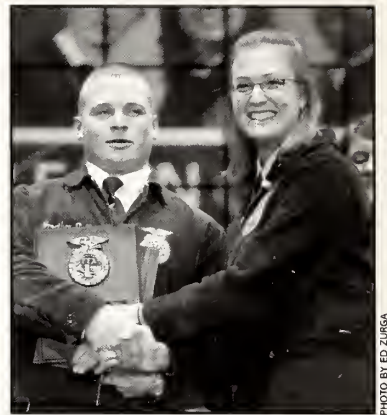
member of McCook Central FFA Chapter. She organized and raised money for a cancer victim, organized and raised money for Breast Cancer Awareness Month for two schools, and organized activities for the residents in a nursing home. Fendrich also helped to organize a day to teach youth about farm safety.

Stump is a member of Highland FFA Chapter from Gilbert, Az. She taught a lesson in her agricultural leadership class. She also began promoting international agriculture in an introductory level agriculture class and kept one of her Buff Orpington chicks in a special education classroom.

In order to promote diversity in her community, Czaja of the Mattabeset FFA chapter organized a series of events that helped educate others about weather, tick-borne diseases and lack of feed supplies.

John William Elliot, a retired agricultural teacher, was nominated for the non-member award due to his acceptance of females in the high school agricultural education environment. Almost two decades before females could officially be FFA members, Elliot welcomed girls into his high school agriculture classes.

This award was reestablished in 1995 to recognize the New Farmers of America's (NFA) place in FFAs history. Dr. H.O. Sargent was instrumental in helping form the organization. Today, all students of all walks of life are able to participate in FFA events because of leaders who worked to make a difference.



Jonathon Goff reached out to members with disabilities and was honored with the H.O. Sargent award.

H.O. Sargent Member Winner

Jonathon Goff
Tampa Bay Tech Senior FFA Chapter
Florida

National Finalists

Amy Czaja
Mattabeset FFA Chapter
Connecticut

Molly Fendrich
McCook Central FFA Chapter
South Dakota

Laura Stump
Highland FFA Chapter
Arizona

Non-Member National Recipients

John Elliot
Washington



Finalists for the H.O. Sargent Award were honored on stage at the fifth general session.

sented with the H.O. Sargent member award at the 77th National FFA Convention. Being a student with a disability, Goff recognized the need to provide other FFA members with disabilities opportunities to participate in events. Leading by example, he has showed other members that they can participate in a variety of FFA activities, regardless of their abilities.

Other finalists for the member award included Molly Elizabeth Fendrich, South Dakota; Laura Stump, Arizona; and Amy Czaja, Connecticut.

Fendrich is a 17-year-old

Collegiate FFA



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Collegiate students were able to get a jump start on their careers by talking with recruiters from some of the nation's top agricultural companies.

Among the thousands of FFA members who attend national convention every year, there are always college students who make the trip to convention to participate in events or to represent their university's collegiate FFA chapter. The 77th convention provided two firsts for college students: a collegiate FFA dance and a collegiate career expo.

Dances are a tradition at national convention for many FFA members. This year, college students had the chance to show off their dance moves during Friday night's collegiate FFA dance held at Jillian's. Students had a great time at the event, which was from 8 p.m. to midnight, as they danced to a variety of music, played cards and socialized with other students from collegiate chapters.

"The purpose of this is to meet collegiate FFA members from around the nation," said Tate Rosenbush, a student at Texas A&M. "It's a great chance to get ideas to take back to your home

chapter. Anything you can do to improve your chapter is worth it."

Not only was there an opportunity for collegiate fun, but students also attended the first collegiate career expo. Unlike the FFA National Agricultural Career Show, where students learn more about the agricultural industry, students at the collegiate career show talked with agricultural companies about job and internship possibilities.

"I'm just here to get my name out there—hopefully to get an internship," said Philip Turner of North Carolina.

Collegiate members also had the opportunity to attend workshops offering tips on finding a career in agriculture, excelling in job interviews and building successful agricultural organizations. Workshop presenters Andrew McCrea, James Garner and Dr. Rick Rudd, all well-versed in the fields of career development, leadership and education, gave collegiate students many helpful insights into achieving career success.

Collegiate Career Expo Exhibitors



Archer Daniels Midland
Carhartt
Case IH
Caterpillar
Chevrolet
Dow AgroSciences
DuPont
Fastline
John Deere
Kraft
Monsanto
New Holland
Pioneer
Syngenta
Toyota
Tractor Supply Company
Tyson
United States Department of Agriculture

Collegiate Workshop Sponsors

Pioneer
Agrilience
John Deere
Syngenta



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Many college students were able to secure internships through on-the-spot interviews with company representatives.

Career Development Events



FFA Career Development Events (CDEs) are more than just competitions—they're experiences that develop skills necessary for future success. CDEs introduce FFA members to principles used in the agricultural industry and in today's business world.



PHOTO BY EO ZURGA

The livestock evaluation CDE prepares students for careers in working with market animals.

Students and advisors agree that career development events CDEs also bring life to agricultural concepts taught in classes.

"Instead of just being in the classroom, [students] have something that's relevant to real-life situations," said Charlotte Forst, a Colorado FFA advisor whose chapter participated in the farm business management CDE. "It's not something I'm going to write on the board and then [students] are going to forget later on."

FFA members participated in 23 CDEs at national convention, displaying their talents and knowledge in events

such as parliamentary procedure, livestock judging, agricultural communications and public speaking. Each day at convention, blue jackets filled Freedom Hall's West Wing, the CDE hub, as participants from across the country put to use the many hours they spent preparing. While individuals and teams hope to do well at convention, FFA members know, regardless of the outcome, CDE participation is a worthwhile experience.

"Even though you may not win, you're going to gain a lot of knowledge," said Donna Drebes of Palmyra FFA in Missouri.

Agricultural Communications

Sponsored by Successful Farming-Agriculture Online, National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: Montezuma Community H.S., Iowa—Lindsay Phillips, Vanna Bushong, Sara Iverson, Amber Smith and advisor Rick Swenson
High Individual: Lindsay Phillips of Montezuma, Iowa

Agricultural Issues Forum

Sponsored by Elanco Animal Health, A Division of Eli Lilly & Co.

Winning Team: Shenandoah H.S., Indiana—Charli McCord, Christen Sanders, Megan Thompson, Tod Moore, Nick Gibson, Justin Norris and advisor Steve Hickey

Agricultural Mechanics

Sponsored by Firestone Agricultural Tire Company/Bridgestone Firestone Trust Fund

Winning Team: North Shelby H.S., Missouri—Laura Beach, David Dunn, Derek Willey and advisor Harold Eckler

High Individual: Laura Beach of North Shelby H.S., Missouri

Agricultural Sales

Sponsored by Monsanto Company

Winning Team: Jefferson West H.S., Kansas—Melissa Bigham, John Bergin, Jolie VanPetten, Ashton Becker and advisor Steve Buss

High Individual: Amber Rasche of Southwest Star Concept H.S., Minnesota

Agronomy

Sponsored by Bayer CropScience

Winning Team: Marshfield H.S., Missouri—Chase Wilson, Carrie Smith, Brad Myers, Whitney Evans and advisor Bill Roberts

High Individual: Rusty Lowe of North Union H.S., Ohio

Creed Speaking

Sponsored by CHS, National FFA Foundation

High Individual: Elizabeth Mulkey of Hutto Middle School, Georgia

Dairy Cattle Evaluation

Sponsored by Associated Milk Producers Inc., Westfalia Surge, Inc., National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: James Buchanan H.S., Pennsylvania—Aaron Horst, John Fisher, Meagan Meyers, Shaina Martin and advisor Lisa Shaw

High Individual: Aaron Horst of James Buchanan H.S., Pennsylvania

Dairy Foods

Sponsored by Dairy Farmers of America, National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: Hillsdale H.S., Ohio—Mandy Bisesi, Paul Bicker, Robert McNaul, Gwen Snyder and advisor Mark Hoffman

High Individual: Robert McNaul of Hillsdale H.S., Ohio

Environmental/Natural Resources

Sponsored by Ford Trucks, USDA-NRCS, Tyson Foods Inc.

Winning Team: Bartlett Yancey H.S., North Carolina—
Alaric Gwynn, Mary White, Jayce Cook, Jill Watlington
and advisor Thomas White

High Individual: Jayce Cook of Bartlett Yancey H.S., North
Carolina

Extemporaneous Public Speaking

Sponsored by American Farm Bureau Federation

High Individual: Laura Hogan of Choudrant H.S., Louisiana

Farm Business Management

Sponsored by John Deere

Winning Team: Vale H.S., Oregon—Mark Noble, Phil Noble,
Traci Romans, Ben Carpenter and advisor Victor Noble

High Individual: Mark Noble of Vale H.S., Oregon

Floriculture

Sponsored by American Floral Endowment, Ball Horticultural
Company, National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: Southwest Star Concept H.S.,
Minnesota—Emily Bartosh, Laura Kalfs, Jessica Leopold,
Jenna Pomerence and advisor Louise Worm

High Individual: Adam Crews of Muscatine H.S., Iowa

Food Science & Technology

Sponsored by Dairy Farmers of America, The Coca-Cola
Company, National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: James Madison H.S., Texas—Lindsey
Boyer, Erica Hawks, Megan Walsh, Gina Munch and
advisor Doak Stewart

High Individual: Melissa Egan of Conrad Weiser H.S.,
Pennsylvania

Forestry

Sponsored by BASF, International Paper, Inc., National FFA
Foundation

Winning Team: Forsyth H.S., Missouri—Cole Wyatt,
Nathan Storts, Adam Johnson, Casey Williams and advi-
sor John Wyatt

High Individual: Cole Wyatt of Forsyth, Missouri

Horse Evaluation

Sponsored by DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund; Dodge
Division, DaimlerChrysler Corporation; Evergreen Mills, Inc.;
KENT Feeds, Inc.; Roper USA

Winning Team: Warsaw Community H.S., Indiana—Kacee
Steffe, Mallory Martin, Amanda Fozo, Whitney Small
and advisor Lynnette Markley

High Individual: Mallory Martin of Warsaw Community
H.S., Indiana

Job Interview

Sponsored by Tractor Supply Company

High Individual: Emory Luth of Shiloh H.S., Illinois

Livestock Evaluation

Sponsored by Alpharma Animal Health Division, Merial,
Performance Awards Center (PAC), National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: Winters H.S., California—Brenden
Benson, Jacob Thorne, Jesse Beckett, Matt Hayes and
advisor Kent Benson

High Individual: Matt Hayes of Winters H.S., California

Marketing Plan

Sponsored by DeBruce Grain, DTN, DuPont Company

Winning Team: Hudson H.S., Iowa—Jenny Lichty, Sarah
Rammelsberg, Lily Darold and advisor Dennis Deppe

Meats Evaluation & Technology

Sponsored by Cargill Meat Solutions, Hormel Foods
Corporation/Jennie-O Turkey Store, Oscar Mayer Foods
Premium Standard Farms, Tyson Foods, Inc.

Winning Team: Clovis H.S., California—Jared Cordeiro,
Kaitlyn Coyes, Brenna Bourez, Whitney Groth and advi-
sor Ken Dias

High Individual: Danny Lotspeich of Wells H.S., Nevada

Nursery/Landscape

Sponsored by Arvesta Corporation, FMC Corporation, Kubota
Tractor Corporation, STIHL, Inc.

Winning Team: Chatham Central H.S., North Carolina—
Daniel Douglas, Ryan Lambert, Stephanie Lyons, Carrie
Scott and advisor Julian Smith

High Individual: Carrie Scott of Chatham Central H.S.,
North Carolina



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

It takes an eye for beauty and an abundance of
creativity to succeed in the Floriculture CDE.

Parliamentary Procedure

Sponsored by Syngenta

Winning Team: Cheyenne East H.S., Wyoming—Jessie
Berry, Amy Berry, Brenna Cummings, Lander Nicodemus,
Dani Rizzuto, Kari Ward and advisor Tommy Cress

Poultry Evaluation

Sponsored by Bayer Corporation Animal Health Division, Tyson
Foods, Inc., U.S. Poultry & Egg Association

Winning Team: East Central H.S., Texas: Jonathan Preiss,
John Doty, Miles Guelker, Nick Hudek and advisor
Dennis Ellebracht

High Individual: Nick Hudek of East Central H.S., Texas

Prepared Public Speaking

Sponsored by Arvesta Corporation, New Dominion
Management, National FFA Foundation

High Individual: Aaron Preston of Branch Area Career
Center, Michigan

National Officer Candidates



National Officer Candidates reception sponsored by Agri Business Group Inc. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Only six candidates get elected to serve on the national officer team, but each candidate demonstrated the markings of a true leader during convention.

While some FFA members and delegates attended sessions, visited the career show, participated in CDEs, toured Churchill Downs and whirled on rides at Six-Flags, this year's national officer candidates spent the week interviewing, participating in activities and taking tests. They all had high hopes of serving this year as an officer of the National FFA Organization, one of the greatest honors the organization can bestow upon a member.

If elected, the national officers take a leave of absence from their university studies so they can fully dedicate themselves as an ambassador of FFA. During their year of service, each national officer travels over 100,000 miles, both in the United States and abroad.

Even though only six candidates—a president, secretary and four vice-presidents from their respective regions—have the opportunity to serve, all of the participants left the convention with new friendships and a sense of pride.

Alabama: Alyson Johnson, Geraldine
 Arizona: Brian Hogue, Willcox
 Arkansas: Tory Hodges, Alpena
 Colorado: Jake Michal, Flagler
 Connecticut: Stephen Russell, Housatonic Valley
 Florida: Stacy Revels, South Sumter
 Georgia: Rachael McCall, Wilcox County
 Idaho: Trent Van Leuven, Rigby
 Illinois: Jay Kelley, Princeville
 Indiana: Benjamin Leu, Prairie Heights
 Iowa: Betsy Ratashak, Murray
 Kansas: Justine Sterling, South Barber
 Kentucky: Joshua McCubbins, Nelcon County
 Louisiana: CC DuBois, Ponchatoula
 Michigan: Ryan Peterson, Cassopolis
 Minnesota: Eric Sawatzke, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted
 Mississippi: Meredith McCurdy, South Panola
 Missouri: Nichole Busdieker, Warrenton
 Montana: Amanda Cloud, Stevensville
 Nebraska: Adam Wollenburg, Tri County
 Nevada: Dylan Krenka, Ruby Mountain
 New Hampshire: Melanie Sanborn, Seacoast School of Technology
 New Jersey: Brian Eitner, Newton
 New Mexico: Johnathon Walsh, Moriarty
 North Carolina: Lendy Yeaman, Bartlett Yancey
 North Dakota: Kevin Teigen, Rugby
 Ohio: Lindsey Calhoun, Ross-Butler Tech
 Oklahoma: Tracy Smith, Guthrie
 Oregon: Tyler Bradley, Elkton
 Pennsylvania: David Bittner, Brothersvalley
 Puerto Rico: Adianez Santiago, S.U. Dr. Jose Padin
 South Dakota: Jared Knock, Willow Lake
 Tennessee: Chris Vessell, Lincoln County
 Texas: Jerod Justice, Athens
 Utah: Tiffany Clegg, North Summit
 Vermont: Patrick Deering, Middlebury
 Virginia: Jordan Liskey, Turner Ashby
 Washington: Eric Dobbins, Cheney
 West Virginia: Amber Somerville, Wirt County
 Wisconsin: Jacquelyn Mundt, Pittsville
 Wyoming: Emily Horton, Shoshoni

National FFA Band

Sponsored by individual workplace contributors to the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Alaska: Jaron Kloap

California: Shannon Kelley, Jordan Ridenhour

Colorado: Kathleen Kropp

Florida: James Hunter

Georgia: Justin Brantley

Idaho: Jason Chilson

Illinois: Jessica Hanson, Daniel Lesch, Amy Senffner, Kayla Spangler

Indiana: Elise Brown; Trevor Perkins

Iowa: Allison Fank, Sarah Knott, Erick Licht, Bethany Pint

Kansas: Todd Halling

Kentucky: John Bell, Whitney Goodin, Kristin Goodin, Karen Morgan

Maine: Nicole Kirlin

Maryland: Megan Jones

Michigan: Caitlin Dickerson, Gabriel Holdwick, Jennifer Johnston, Michael Koglin, Paul Mellgren, April Mellgren, Erika Schroeder

Minnesota: Cheryl Petzel, Marie Rindahl, Abigail Wirt

Mississippi: Steve Parham

Missouri: Jonathan Arnold, Jacob Bowyer, Lacy Edwards, John Gilbert, Thomas (TJ) Higgins, Danielle Hyde, Kristen Kallash, Jessica Martin, Hannah Robinson, Andrew Wallace, Timothy Wood, Megan Wyant

Montana: Sarah Begger, Tyler Bokma, Megan Fallon, Anne Marek, Tymbre Stender, Wyn Walker

Nebraska: Savannah Dorn, Jacob Hoffman, Melissa Hottovy, Abby Knobbe, Jessica Sexson, Cassie Thomas

New York: Samuel Mason, Laura Walter

Ohio: James Bethel, Heather Gottke, Jayna Hartzler, Abbey Kramer, Emily Lockwood, Dale Mayer, Brystal Slator

Oklahoma: Jerod Cottom, Gage Jeter, Mattie Nutley, Virginia Schmitt, Sarah Smith

Oregon: Clint Buchanan, Matthew Hill

Puerto Rico: Jarnelles Perez

South Dakota: Courtney Buechler

Texas: William Gorley, Morgan Oliver, Austin Owens

Washington: Amy Clark, Benjamin Dailey, Adam Lyon, Megan Rizer

Wisconsin: Joseph Binversie, Carmen Braun, Molly Day, Timothy Ecklor, Cole Krupke, Angela Kujawski, Lacey Schreurs, Craig Stiemke

Wyoming: Mary Perue, Caleb Higgins

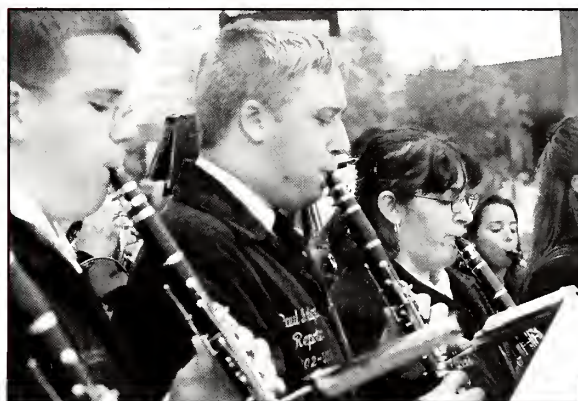


PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

FFA promotes a level of team work and leadership that is unprecedented by any youth organization. One of the unique ways that the FFA encourages students to develop their ability to work in groups and explore their musical talents is through the National FFA Band.

Under the direction of Joe LaJoye, this year's band was composed of 91 members who represent 29 states. The band preformed at the general sessions and entertained the delegates at the FFA Band and Chorus concert Friday night.

John Bell is a second year trombone player for the National FFA Band. He joined the national band because of his interest in music and advice from his advisor.

"Last year I came in and met a bunch of new people. Walked in the door late this year and I heard people screaming my name. I thought 'wow I know them!'" It is a long standing relationship. Even though you don't talk to them everyday, you will be remembered," he said.

Being a member of the band is a prestigious honor. Members audition by submitting an audition tape, which demonstrates both their talent and ability. To ensure the highest possible number of FFA members can take part in this opportunity, students may only participate in the band at two conventions.

National FFA Chorus

***Sponsored by Archer Daniels Midland (ADM)
as a special project of the National FFA
Foundation.***

FFA members agree that diversity of talents adds spice to their membership. The opportunities and experiences are countless for members who want to use their talents and get involved; the National FFA Chorus is one of these opportunities.

On Saturday 89 FFA members arrived at convention to begin warming up their voices for the week ahead. The group began a long series of rehearsals under the direction of Patti LaJoye.

Ashley Martin from Greenridge, Mo., is a first year FFA chorus member, said she had been in state choir for two years before trying out for the national chorus. "It [National FFA Chorus] was a goal and I made it," she said.

This year the chorus entertained members with songs before and during sessions, in front of Freedom Hall, and at the band concert with *Everybody Has a Dream*, *For the Longest Time*, *Can You Feel the Love Tonight*, *Brand New Day*, *I've Got the Music in Me*, *Someday You Gotta Dance*, *Georgia on My Mind*, *Beegees Night Fever*, *I Will Make a Difference*, and many others.



California: Jacob Walker

Colorado: Sarah Clark, Ceri Parker, Morgan Parker

Delaware: Stephon Fitzpatrick

Iowa: Jordanne Blair, Jesse Bunge, David Fishel, Afton Holt, Micah Johnson, Janna Shifflett, Gabriel Twedt, Michael Waniorek

Illinois: Ryan Bass, Mitchell Clapper, Sarah Conner, Stacey Dehlinger, Deidre Evans, Jeff Potthoff, Gregory Reif

Indiana: Natalie Harmeyer, Rachel Pickering

Kansas: Caleb Alexander, Courtney Wehking, Aaron Weiser

Kentucky: Megan Stout

Michigan: Caitlin Lorenc

Minnesota: Jonathan Ertl, Christian Lilienthal

Missouri: Anthony Hagan, Ashley Morton, Richard Sons

Montana: Nikole Disney, Janelle Engel, Robert Orednick

Nebraska: Kelsey Ankerson, Cayla Friedli, Derek Gaschler, Jasey Goedeken, Sarah Hoffman, Rachel Johnson, Benjamin Kreifels, Michael McQueen, Carrie Rice, Candace Ross, Aaryn Schultz, Megan Schultz, Clint Shipman, Trisha Simonsen

New Hampshire: William Farris

New York: Brenna Therrien

North Dakota: Andrea Blohm, Tiffany Krinke, Jon Leadbetter, Sarah Stockman

Oklahoma: Matthew Catlett, Carissa Dominguez, Ashton Emerson, Christopher James, Karie Scott, Leana Wion, Charissa Zoschke

Oregon: Lauren Lucht

Pennsylvania: Phillip Collins

South Dakota: Melanie Koehlmoos; Mallory Larson; JoAnna Strom

Tennessee: Casey Williams, Brandon Callis, Amanda Greenwood, Rebecca Herrera, Jake Hobden, Tiffany Landry, Landin Mathison, Stacy Prukop, Christen Sills, Allison Stitt, Lydia Ward

Virginia: Benjamin Heizer

Washington: Rebecca Johnson

Wisconsin: Julie Best, Kimberly Desens, Nickolas D'Huyvetter, Dan Filla, Lindsy Hagen, Bryan Odeen, Courtney Pease, Dustin Schmidt, Mark VerBurg

Wyoming: Kolby Condos, Kimberly Fairbourn

PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

National FFA Talent

Each year at convention, FFA members showcase their talents and entertain students in a variety of ways. In fact, most FFA members love the talent portions of each session. Wisconsin FFA member Krista Asper, for example, said watching the different talents is a major convention highlight and is one of her favorite parts of being at convention.

"You get to see the talent from all over the country," Asper said.

At the National FFA Talent Revue Thursday evening, students entertained the audience with their vocal performances and dance moves, showing that talent continues to run deep within FFA.

Oklahoma FFA member Myles Simpson, for example, sang a powerful rendition of "Your Raise Me Up," and North Carolina's Daphne Houchin danced to the "Irish Jig Song." The talent revue made such an impression on convention speaker Linda Larsen, she mentioned it in her keynote address.

"That was one of the most awesome talent shows I've ever seen," Larsen said. "American Idol has nothing on you."

In addition to the talent show, FFA members performed before convention sessions and at the food court.



Alabama: Jordan Barrios, Enterprise; James Beck, Enterprise; Robert Foy, Enterprise; Will Galloway, Enterprise; Magen Green, Enterprise; Katie Haynes, Enterprise; Andrew Locklear, Enterprise; Brandon Nelson, Enterprise; Allison Norris, Enterprise; Max Oden, Enterprise; Tyler Mills, Enterprise; Will Rainer, Enterprise; Vanessa Vega, Enterprise; Joseph Waters, Enterprise; Clay Wilkes, Enterprise; Katie Allen, Montevallo; Daniel Cardone, Montevallo; Samantha Green, Montevallo; Adam Hardin, Montevallo; Cody Horton, Montevallo; Calvin Meadows, Montevallo; Sara Ruper, Montevallo; Naomi McKinney, Fort Payne

Arkansas: Brandon Robertson, Ola

California: Jennifer Keithly, Kelseyville

Florida: Michael Green, Haines City

Georgia: Crystal Carter, Lowndes Co.

Idaho: Stetson Wilson, Highland

Illinois: Michael Wombles, Pleasant Hill

Indiana: Diana Coy, Franklin; Casey Zeller, Hamilton Southeastern; Rachel Zeller, Hamilton Southeastern; Jill Brinker, Hope

Iowa: Bridget Driscoll, Williamsburg-Hawkeye-Marengo; Miciah Heintz, Williamsburg-Hawkeye-Marengo

Kansas: Blaine Oswald, Atchison County

Kentucky: Sarah Kuegel, Apollo; Susan Kuegel, Apollo

Louisiana: Jennifer Honeycutt, Natchitoches Central

Maryland: Rebecca Funk, Clear Spring

Michigan: Amanda Freeman, Grant; Jennifer Sikkenga, Montague; Sarah Bernia, Unionville-Sebewaing

Minnesota: John Larkie, Houston

Mississippi: Sabrina Griffith, Enterprise Lincoln

Missouri: Jessica Erwin, Memphis; Miranda Leppin, Milan; Anthony Hagan, Monroe City; Jacob Remboldt, Smithville

Montana: Mandy Jacobs, Shepherd

Nebraska: Lauren Perry, Kimball; Kyle Perry, Kimball

New Jersey: Victoria Anema, Warren Hills

New Mexico: Alexandra Brooks, Texico

New York: Samantha Hanchan, Schuylerville

North Carolina: Maegan Wolfe, Ayden-Grifton; Daphne Houchins, Believers Faith Center Christian Academy; Ivy Gregg, Madison; Ashley Heath, Madison; Derrick Ledford, Madison; Jacob Pegg, Madison; Amanda Sams, Madison; Nathaniel Shelton, Madison; Madeline Trilling, Madison

North Dakota: Tiffany Krinke, Scranton

Ohio: Jason Raymond, Eldon; Jeremy Hupman, Greenville

Oklahoma: Randie Davidson, Hardesty; Kayla McKee, Haworth; Jennica Kinney, Mooreland; Rachel Smith, Rattan; Myles Simpson, Thomas-Fay-Custer

Oregon: Jill Wettstein, Ontario; Tana Jo Webb, Woodburn

Pennsylvania: Amy Lawrence, Wilmington Area

Puerto Rico: Haydeé Pagan, Segunda Unifed; Gloribel Cruz, S.U. Botijas I; José Miranda, S.U. Botijas I; Omar Ortiz, S.U. Botijas I; Luis Rivera, S.U. Botijas I; Marianela Rivera, S.U. Botijas I

Tennessee: Simone Landry, Brighton High

Utah: Shayla Osborn, Dixie

Virginia: Cora Gnegy, Strasburg

Washington: Jennifer Hood, Onalaska

Wisconsin: Magdalene Kneip, East Troy

Director: Gary L. Maricle, Liberty, Missouri

Assistant Director: Erin Pigg, Bushnell, Illinois

Proficiency Awards



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

The agricultural proficiency award program provides FFA members with another opportunity to learn, lead and succeed. Members are able to learn practical knowledge through real world experiences which prepares them for leadership roles in their futures.

At national convention each year outstanding members are recognized for their hard work throughout the year. An SAE or a supervised agricultural experience serves as an "agricultural laboratory." Students are able to apply the skills they learned in the classroom through hands-on application.

Members can work in the agricultural industry and apply for a placement proficiency award, or they can start their own business and apply for an entrepreneurship proficiency award.

Agricultural Communications

Sponsored by Farm Progress Companies Inc; United States Auto Club

Emily Brooke Byers - Georgia
Megan Jacobsen - California
David Golembeski - Connecticut
Megan Allen - Wisconsin

Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication

Sponsored by Carry-On Trailer Corporation; Dodge Division, DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund

Neal Goodlett - Kentucky
Seth Dugger - Indiana
Brandon Whittington - Missouri
John Meyer - Wisconsin

Agricultural Mechanics Energy Systems

Sponsored by New Holland

Richard Bartos - Nebraska
Tim Anderson - Minnesota
Brandon James Priest - Virginia
Adam L. VandenPlas - Wisconsin

Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance

Sponsored by CARQUEST Corporation, CARQUEST Filters/CARQUEST Gaskets

Anthony Waldrige - Kentucky
Dustin Koopman - Iowa
Mitchell Helms - North Carolina
David William Moss - Washington

Agricultural Processing

Sponsored by Archer Daniels Midland Company; CHS; Ralcorp Holdings Inc.; National FFA Foundation

Eric Schroeder - Wisconsin
John R. Lewis, Jr. - Illinois
Daniel A. McFerren - Ohio
Kyle Hillegas - Pennsylvania

Agricultural Sales - Entrepreneurship

Sponsored by Chevrolet; GMAC

Neal Ely - Nebraska
Jay M. Stamm - Kansas
Derek Griesse - South Dakota
Jason J. Cerven - Wisconsin

Agricultural Sales - Placement

Sponsored by The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company; Tractor Supply Company; Vigortone Ag Products

Andrew J. Swarthout - California
Stephen Thomas Peterson - Montana
April Leigh Baird - North Carolina
Christopher J. Duchsherer - North Dakota

Agricultural Services

Sponsored by Chevrolet; GMAC; New Holland

Michael W. Schmidt - Wisconsin
Ryan Ean Smith - Florida
Braidie Butters - Michigan
Kaylee Lyn Kramer - Nebraska

Aquaculture

Sponsored by Intervet Inc.; Purina/Land O'Lakes

Blake C. Ruebush - Illinois
Morgan Frances Broeme - North Carolina
Jeremy Lee Shartzter - Tennessee
Brian Steven Orndorff - Virginia

Proficiency Awards

Beef Production – Entrepreneurship

Sponsored by Nasco Division-
Nasco International Inc.;
Schering-Plough Animal Health

David Gary Farmer, Jr. - Georgia
Chase Bontrager - Kansas
Devin D. Miller - Oklahoma
Tyson Seth Bushman - Utah

Beef Production – Placement

Sponsored by ContiBeef LLC;
Fort Dodge Animal Health; Pfizer
Animal Health; Texas Cattle
Feeders Association

Austin Lambrich - Illinois
Brady Lee Revels - Florida
Michael James Certain - Georgia
Jillian Claire Warren - Kentucky

Dairy Production – Entrepreneurship

Sponsored by DeLaval Inc.; Pfizer
Animal Health

Gregory S. Hartschuh - Ohio
Heather E. Savelle - Georgia
Amanda Brooke Shaffer - Pennsylvania
Allen Dean Heishman, II - Virginia

Dairy Production – Placement

Sponsored by Monsanto

Brock W. Peters - Kansas
Albert Joseph Brasil - California
Andrew Nicol - Ohio
McKenzie M. Klein - Washington

Diversified Agricultural Production

Georgia Boot Inc.; National FFA
Foundation

Gary W. Rodgers - Illinois
Doug Carter - Florida
Nicholas T. Hardesty - Kentucky
C. Pete Bush - Michigan

Diversified Crop Production – Entrepreneurship

CHS

Ruth I. Bobbitt - Oklahoma
Jacob Wesley Sache - Florida
Nathan J. Baker - Michigan
Jay Smithback - Wisconsin

Diversified Crop Production – Placement

American Farm Bureau Insurance
Services Inc.; National Crop
Insurance Services; Rain and Hail
LLC; National FFA Foundation

Jess Little - Texas
Jon Thompson - Georgia
Gregory Brandon Stump - Kentucky
Mitchell T. Kramer - Minnesota

Diversified Horticulture – Entrepreneurship

FarmLand Insurance Nationwide
Agribusiness; Nationwide
Foundation

Aaron Tournoux - Ohio
Tyler J. Zollinger - Idaho
Ashley N. Lyon - Missouri
Michelle Burniston - Tennessee

Diversified Horticulture – Placement

Bayer Environmental Science;
Gowan

Elizabeth Miemietz - Wisconsin
Jessica Crisci - Connecticut
Kimberly Mosbaugh - Indiana
Elizabeth M. Fister - Kentucky



Diversified Livestock Production – Entrepreneurship

ContiBeef LLC; Intervet Inc.;
Tractor Supply Company

Will Cabe - Georgia
Victoria Louisa Lyons - Florida
Joshua David VanDeWalle - Nebraska
Travis L. Schnaithman - Oklahoma

Diversified Livestock Production – Placement

Agri Beef Company; Premium
Standard Farms; Zareba Systems

Matthew T. Repinski - Wisconsin
Myciah A. McColm - Kansas
Chris McElroy - Missouri
Wravenna Nadyne Phipps - Nebraska

Emerging Agricultural Technology

Chevrolet; ISK BioSciences;
Micro Flo Company

Paul Andrew Ruddle, II - Georgia
Jeffery William Bell - Iowa
Aaron M. Catalanatto - Louisiana
Alex Welk - South Dakota

Environmental Science and Natural Resource Management

IMC Global Inc.

Shalyne A. Van Worth - California
Cody Joe Hill - Kansas
Krista R. Brag - North Dakota
Brian Cooper - Oklahoma

Equine Science – Entrepreneurship

Durango Boot; Purina Mills
Inc. LLC; Red Brand Non-Climb
Horse Fence-Made by Keystone
Steel & Wire Company

Myles M. Branch - North Carolina
Amanda C. Cristler - California
Michael W. Allison - Kansas
Haley Madden - Wisconsin

Equine Science – Placement

Tractor Supply Company

C.C. DuBois - Louisiana
Barbara Tortora - Florida
Jesse D. Studnicka - Nebraska
Megan Ashley Sturgeon - Oklahoma

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Proficiency Awards



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Fiber and/or Oil Crop Production

Syngenta Seeds Inc.; United Soybean Board; Helena Chemical

Andrew D. Bowman - Illinois
Stuart L. Joy - New Mexico
Newton B. Miller - Oklahoma
Tony Crescio - Wisconsin

Floriculture

Home Depot Inc.

Shawna K. Branham - Ohio
Eve Felton - Georgia
Brandon T. Bragg - Texas
Catherine Marian Street - Wisconsin

Food Science and Technology

CHS; Seneca Foods Corporation; National FFA Foundation

Rachel N. Stuart - Illinois
Francis J. Villalobos - California
Staci R. Smith - Ohio
Heather Smith - Texas

Forage Production

Gehl Company; Unity Seeds; National FFA Foundation

Melissa Ann Brinlee - California
Adam T. Arnold - Georgia
Nate G. Boyd - Montana
Rowdy Cumbie - Texas

Forest Management and Products

Dodge Division, DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund; Timberjack, A John Deere Company; National FFA Foundation

Zeb D. Bradford - Oklahoma
Justin D. Snow - Illinois
Gary Robert Delaney - Minnesota
Jason P. Gray - Missouri

Fruit Production

DuPont Company

James F. Caminata, III - California
Catherine Anne Waldeck - Illinois
Jessica Ann Rowley - Utah
Chad G. Olsen - Wisconsin

Grain Production - Entrepreneurship

Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.

Lee Michael Bushman - Wisconsin
Dustin T. Cole - Illinois
Alesa Ann Raasch - Missouri
Matthew Michael Humphrey - Tennessee

Grain Production - Placement

Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.

Tyler J. Francis - Missouri
Robert Edwin McClatchey - Indiana
Trent Dowdy - Tennessee
Zachery J. Thompson - Wisconsin

Home and/or Community Development

Carhartt Inc.

Ward Black - Georgia
Kayln M. Boge - Iowa
Peter C. Fischer - Louisiana
Jason T. Mathiesen - South Dakota

Landscape Management

Bayer Environmental Science

Jwaltney J. Daniels - Georgia
Tim A. Jennett - Iowa
Edward R. Kijowski - New Jersey
Bradley R. Traaseth - Wisconsin

Nursery Operations

Dodge Division, DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund; FMC Corporation

Marcus J. Zondag - Wisconsin
Keri Leanne Pilgrim - Georgia
Jennifer R. Hansen - Iowa
Kevin M. Spada - Oregon

Outdoor Recreation

Chevrolet; Justin Brands Inc.; National FFA Foundation

Kelsey Deaton - Ohio
Zachery M. Peterson - Nebraska
Derek M. Shively - North Dakota
Amy Rogers - Utah



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Proficiency Awards

Poultry Production

Chore-Time Equipment Division
of CTB Incorporated; Wayne
Farms LLC; National FFA
Foundation

Nicole Leigh Cisson - Georgia
Matt Myers - Missouri
Matt Fortkamp - Ohio
Zachary H. Waldron - Virginia

Sheep Production

LA-CO Markal; Wrangler

Summer M. Becklund -
Minnesota
Cody Kneupper - Texas
Matthew James LeFever -
Washington
Megan Bishop - Wisconsin

Small Animal Production and Care – Entrepreneurship

National FFA Foundation

Chris Yearwood - Georgia
Beau Williamson - California
Michael S. Gerdeman - Missouri
Jake T. Brabender - Wisconsin

Small Animal Production and Care – Placement

National FFA Foundation

Krista Holstein - Nebraska
Lisete Marie Melo - California
Ashley Hurlburt - Connecticut
Kelli Breanne Herbel - Oklahoma

Specialty Animal Production

Purina Mills/Land O'Lakes Feed

Austin G. Bougie - Washington
Ray Smallwood - Georgia
Shannon Douglas Wheeler -
Illinois
Kiel Hausler - Wisconsin



PHOTO BY ED ZURKA

Specialty Crop Production

BASF; Cerexagri

Kelli Jo Hoffman - Indiana
Kristy Crow - California
Kelly Blair Connitt - Missouri
Harris Green - Tennessee

Swine Production – Entrepreneurship

Pfizer Animal Health

Jeremy Flax - Ohio
Jillian E. Kempen - Texas
Kirstjn Hansen - Washington
Kevin M. Nelson - Wisconsin

Swine Production – Placement

Akey, Inc.; Phibro Animal Health

Ashley Maire Streff - South
Dakota
John W. Bailey - California
Justin O'Neal Davenport -
Kentucky
Lesley W. Browne - Nebraska

Turf Grass Management – Entrepreneurship

John Deere

Alex E. Gottlob - Kansas
Matthew Wrage - Illinois
Tom C. Schroeder - Iowa
Caleb Fuqua - Tennessee

Turf Grass Management – Placement

Bayer Environmental Science

Tucker Noonkester - Montana
Jason S. Bates - California
Kelly J. Brink - Nebraska
Audrey DeHart - Utah

Vegetable Production

Briggs & Stratton Corporation
Foundation Inc.

Hannah Marie Sheller -
Wisconsin
Britton Lee Wadsworth -
California
Kevin D. Dasher - Florida
Rebecca Ann Titus - Michigan

Wildlife Production and Management – Entrepreneurship

Bass Pro Shops Inc.; Purina/Land
O'Lakes

Eric Ray McKenzie - Missouri
Avery E. Land - Kansas
Jared Thomas Finnegan -
Nebraska
Michael G. Biel - Wisconsin

Wildlife Production and Management – Placement

Polaris Industries Inc.; Rocky
Mountain Elk Foundation;
National FFA Foundation

Benjamin Thomas French -
Missouri
Christopher Blake Mans -
Arkansas
Kory McGovern - Illinois
Jared Leroy Fullerton - Nebraska

American FFA Degree

The American FFA Degree is the highest degree of membership an FFA member can achieve, and only about one half of one percent of the total national membership of the organization attain this honor. To receive the American FFA Degree, members must demonstrate a solid commitment to agriculture and FFA. 2,849 FFA members were awarded the American degree this year. Recipients were honored at a luncheon and were awarded a certificate onstage Saturday morning for their achievement.

Among those receiving the degrees was Private Wesley Brown of Virginia, who recently spent time serving our nation in Iraq. He was thrilled to be back in the United States so that he could pick up his American degree in person. Brown's presence at the American degree ceremony reminded all FFA members to take pride in being part of such a great organization.

WYOMING: Tara Bolgiano, Pinedale FFA; Kelsey Cowger, Thermopolis FFA; Joshua Cox, Lander FFA; Lexington Lee Geer, Wright FFA; McCort Walt Harris, Jim Bridger FFA; Amanda Hitschew, Lander FFA; Chandi Huseby, Rocky Mountain FFA; Jared Larsen, Lander FFA; Ryan Dean McConnaughey, Riverton FFA; Jesse Simpson, Lyman FFA; Brendan Thoman, Wind River FFA; Kristen Rae Trefren, Cheyenne FFA; Connie Vigil, Basin Paintrock FFA; Steve Walker, Lyman FFA; Bryttini Westlake, Wind River FFA; Kari Zimmerschied, Whitcomb FFA

WISCONSIN: Andrew Abrahamson, Waupaca FFA; Megan Allen, Waupaca FFA; Jason Alvarado, Beaver Dam FFA; Brad Anderson, Sauk Prairie FFA; Heather Ann Anderson, North Crawford FFA; Jordan Anderson, Mineral Point FFA; Michelle Bader, Evansville FFA; Chelsea M. Bakker, Shell Lake FFA; Brett Barlass, Milton FFA; Benjamin J. Bauer, Spencer FFA; Jason R. Belling, Lomira FFA; Cole Binversie, Kiel FFA; Crystal Bleck, Waupaca FFA; Scott Boesel, Unity FFA; Meghan Bolles, Weyauwega-Fremont FFA; Seth Randall Braker, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland FFA; Shawn Brandenburg, Brillion FFA; Shalynn Brandt, Antigo FFA; Zita Bratt, New London FFA; Joseph G.D. Brazil, Weyauwega-Fremont FFA; Timothy S. Brewer, Weyauwega-Fremont FFA; Levi Bruins, Waupun FFA; Ashleigh Marrie Brummel, Black Hawk FFA; Kerri Bruns, Beaver Dam FFA; Jake Bubolz, Reedsville FFA; Daniel Buchholtz, Waupaca FFA; Samantha Lynn Bulger-Kaminski, Pulaski FFA; Sharon Elise Burkhalter, Black Hawk FFA; Fredrick Busse, Reedsville FFA; Josh Claussen, Waupaca FFA; Kathleen Connors, Mt. Horeb FFA; Ashley Cowling, Oskosh North FFA; Matthew Crivits, Blair-Taylor FFA; Mark R. Dahl, Watford FFA; Brenda Dahm, Elkhart Lake FFA; Peter Desens, Marion FFA; Bre Diefenthaler, Waupaca FFA; Peter Docken, Mt. Horeb FFA; Bristol Donahoo, Shawano FFA; Kory Duerst, Verona FFA; Nicole Ebert, Plymouth FFA; Jeremy Eickert, Brillion FFA; Jeff Elmhorst, Granton FFA; William A. Erdenberger, River Ridge FFA; Eric

Evenson, Cambridge FFA; Kimberly Ann Evenson, Cambridge FFA; Didi Ewing, Waupaca FFA; Keisha Faulkner, Weyauwega-Fremont FFA; Adam Fermanich, Plymouth FFA; Daniel Follendorf, Sparta FFA; Catherine Michelle Ford, Plymouth FFA; Ben Freidhof, Colby FFA; David P. Fuller, Lodi FFA; Grant W. Gabler, Augusta FFA; Nicole A. Goebel, Gilman FFA; Megan J. Guenther, Beaver Dam FFA; Nina Hadley, Waupaca FFA; Troy Haese, Reedsville FFA; Linds E. Hagen, Mauston FFA; Nichole Halle, Plymouth FFA; Heidi Hanke, Plymouth FFA; Heidi Hasheider, Sauk Prairie FFA; Samantha L. Heidt, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland FFA; Tara L. Hellenbrand, Sauk Prairie FFA; Philip Jon Hoff, Barron FFA; Brent J. Hohmann, Independence FFA; Tony Horswill, Brillion FFA; Nicole Anna Hosto, Monroe FFA; Ashley Huijbregtse, Plymouth FFA; Amanda Joy Huppert, River Falls FFA; Peter Joseph Idzikowski, Fort Atkinson FFA; Adam Igl, Antigo FFA; Matthew Jahnke, Markesan FFA; Jeanna James, Darlington FFA; Emily L. Johnson, Watford FFA; Melissa A. Jones, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland FFA; James Ju, Oskosh North FFA; Josh Judd, Mt. Horeb FFA; Charles Kastern, Granton FFA; Chris Kastern, Granton FFA; Jeffrey Keen, Antigo FFA; Sarah Kirchner, Clintonville FFA; Katrina Kleinhans, Plymouth FFA; Travis Klinkner, Cashton FFA; Jessica A. Klipfel, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland FFA; Andy Knecht, Spencer FFA; Lisa Kossel, Oskosh North FFA; Michelle Kratt, Shawano FFA; Andy Kramer, Cochrane-Fountain City FFA; Sheena Elizabeth Krebs, Black Hawk FFA; Angela Kringle, Barron FFA; Matthew H. Larse, Black Hawk FFA; Kevin Larsen, Sauk Prairie FFA; Terra Lynne Leasure, East Troy FFA; Eric Lind, Weyauwega-Fremont FFA; Mark S. Lundy, Fort Atkinson FFA; Michelle Maccoux, Green Bay Preble FFA; Linda Lou Malone, Whitewater FFA; Ryan Marin, Green Bay East FFA; Phil Martin, Hartford FFA; Melissa Mateske, Montello FFA; Andrew Mathiebe, Brillion FFA; Rory McAloon, Cambridge FFA; Gary McCarthy, Wauzeka FFA;

Jeffrey R. McNeely, Albany FFA; Sara M. Medick, Stevens Point FFA; Elizabeth Miemietz, Cochrane-Fountain City FFA; Brenda Lee Miller, Hartford FFA; Renea Heller Miller, Unity FFA; Melanie Moon, Fennimore FFA; Charlotte Muenzenberger, Cashton FFA; Stephanie J. Mulderink, Colby FFA; Jacquelyn Mundt, Pittsville FFA; Stephanie Nelson, Plymouth FFA; Rebecca A. Norberg, Prairie Farm FFA; Amanda Olin, Unity FFA; Charles A. Otto, Unity FFA; Traci Palzkill, Dodgeville FFA; Kari Jo Pauli, Lake Mills FFA; Ashley Pratt, Darlington FFA; Dan Preder, Weyauwega-Fremont FFA; Mark Rasmussen, Waupaca FFA; Rose Reisinger, Sauk Prairie FFA; Joshua D. Rimmert, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland FFA; Melissa Nicole Rumpf, Watford FFA; Shane T. Rzentkowski, Amherst FFA; Amanda Kay Schaller, Verona FFA; Todd C. Schaumburg, Seymour FFA;

FFA; Lance Wirth, New Richmond FFA; Amy J. Wood, Clear Lake FFA; Phillip Wynen, Brillion FFA; Kelsey Yager, Dodgeville FFA; Marie M. Zanton, Milton FFA; Jason Kenneth Zeitler, Monroe FFA; Abby Lynn Zorn, Elkhart Lake FFA

WEST VIRGINIA: Sonia Anderson, Monroe County FFA; Sarah V. Blue, Jefferson FFA; Calvin Thomas Exline, Wirt County FFA; Kimberly Godbey, Ripley FFA; Lacey Gorby, Tyler FFA; Allana Gorrell, St. Marys FFA; Robert W. Jackson, Monroe County FFA; Timothy J. Knotts, Taylor County FFA; April D. Mallow, Pendleton County FFA; Phillip Olin Mallow, Pendleton County FFA; Malinda Muhlbach, Ravenswood FFA; Jeff Most, Hedgesville FFA; Gail Lynn Nesselrod, Moorefield FFA; Ashby William Ruddle, Pendleton County FFA; Charles Allen Sisson, Pendleton County FFA; Jon Wendel



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Nicole Schmidt, Gresham FFA; Jay Schreier, Cashton FFA; Jordan Sell, Augusta FFA; Thomas R. Sherven, New Glarus FFA; Lewis Paul Siegmund, Kewaunee FFA; Michael M. Skogen, Mt. Horeb FFA; Pamela Sloma, Denmark FFA; Jill Smith, Hillsboro FFA; Steve Stahmann, Laconia FFA; Kyle Steinmetz, Bloomer FFA; Katie Street, Watford FFA; Eric J. Struck, Kewaunee FFA; Chad Svendsen, Monticello FFA; Jason Syvrud, Mineral Point FFA; Dana Tackes, Stratford FFA; Amy Timm, Weyauwega-Fremont FFA; Melanie Dawn Timm, Weyauwega-Fremont FFA; Andrew Trotz, Markesan FFA; Andy Vanderwerf, Granton FFA; Travis Vine, Neillsville FFA; Dan Vredevel, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland FFA; Joshua M. Wakeman, Rio FFA; Joshua A. Ward, Janesville Craig FFA; Michael Leonard Weinberger, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland FFA; Sheena Marie Welke, Montello FFA; Joshua J. Weninger, Lomira FFA; Travis Winkler, Waupaca

Swecker, Pendleton County FFA; Mark Travis, Doddridge County FFA; Timothy W. VanReenen, Pocahontas County FFA; John David Whitescarver, Taylor County FFA

WASHINGTON: Robby L. Alboucq, Asotin FFA; Brandi Appleford, Asotin FFA; Chance L. Appleford, Asotin FFA; Mary Barstow, Garfield Palouse FFA; Jenna Marie Brott, Asotin FFA; Jason Paul Buche, Springdale FFA; Michael Sebastian Cassara, Mount Vernon FFA; Kyle D. Conklin, Asotin FFA; William Benjamin Cox, Pomeroy FFA; Jordan Croft, Lynden FFA; Eric Dobbins, Cheney FFA; Amber Dryden, Elma FFA; Elizabeth Dyche, Evergreen FFA; Derek Fred, Asotin FFA; Mary Goble, Battle Ground FFA; Joseph Halvorson, Wapato FFA; Michelle Jacobs, Yelm FFA; Roger Allen Jobb, North Thurston FFA; Terry James Keatts, Pomeroy FFA; Sarah JoHelen Kirk, Nooksack Valley FFA; Jessica M. Kirker, Winlock FFA; Luke

American FFA Degree

Klaveano, Pomeroy FFA; Joshua Steven Krieg, Springdale FFA; Hannah LaFontaine, Yelm FFA; Alexis Rose Leonard, Yelm FFA; Christian Louderback, Franklin Pierce FFA; Jessica Mackin, Rochester FFA; Anne Christine Meyer, Pullman FFA; David William Moss, Yelm FFA; Jordan R. Moss, Asotin FFA; Remie R. Murray, Asotin FFA; Tim Ney, Yelm FFA; Andy L. Ockwell, Asotin FFA; Willie Painter, Rochester FFA; Jimmy Palmer, Mount Baker FFA; Joseph Patterson, Ephrata FFA; Sara R. Russell, Moses Lake FFA; Cassie M. Schaefer, Asotin FFA; Jordan G. Schlee, Asotin FFA; Kristin Scholz, Colfax FFA; Elizabeth Sharpe, South Kitsap FFA; Emily A. Silver, Wenatchee FFA; Christopher A. Smith, South Kitsap FFA; Ryan Daniel Stonemetz, Zillah FFA; Savanna Marie Styer, Garfield Palouse FFA; Jordan VanderVeen, Lynden FFA; Joe Walldher, Pomeroy FFA; Robert Travis Walldher, Pomeroy FFA; Tyson Wedin, Ellensburg FFA; Colby A. Witters, Asotin FFA; Dessa D. Witters, Asotin FFA; Cassie Wyman, Ellensburg FFA; Jamie Yoder, Yelm FFA

VIRGINIA: Jeremy Stuart Arehart, Riverheads FFA; Devin L. Basye, Northumberland FFA; Chance Kathryn Berger, Holston FFA; Brian Thomas Brooks, Riverheads FFA; Bruce Lee Brooks, Riverheads FFA; Wesley Joe Brown, Northumberland FFA; Isaac William Burgess, Broadway FFA; Ben Burton, Fort Defiance FFA; Kristin Carr, Fort Defiance FFA; Emily Conroy, Buffalo Gap FFA; Deidre Marie Corvin, George Wythe FFA; Chad Wilson Craun, Turner Ashby FFA; Jonathan Charles Crim, Clarke County FFA; Jimmy Crosby, Buffalo Gap FFA; Eliot Grey Daniels, Carroll County FFA; Terry Lynn Dellinger, Sherando FFA; Becky Derrow, Fort Defiance FFA; Franklin Kenton Dull, Riverheads FFA; Sarah Earhart, Fort Defiance FFA; Jeffery Allan Fogelsong, Rural Retreat FFA; Elizabeth Fuller, Buffalo Gap FFA; Cindy Green, Clarke County FFA; John Pesto Hobbs, Abingdon FFA; Audrey Horn, Buffalo Gap FFA; Alesia Dawn Hovatter, Central FFA; Justin Curtis Joiner, Broadway FFA; Heather Lynn Keagy, Broadway FFA; Heather Kisamore, Buffalo Gap FFA; Deborah Lineberry, Holston FFA; Derek N. Long, Pulaski FFA; Jami Lyle, Buffalo Gap FFA; Caitlyn McNulty, Fort Defiance FFA; Greg Osborne, Holston FFA; Matthew David Rowe, Northumberland FFA; Charles Andrew Rudolph, Rural Retreat FFA; Jason Layne Shultz, Riverheads FFA; Renee Lindsay Sine, Central FFA; Loise Helen Slavik, Holston Horticulture FFA; Rachel L. Swartzel, Stuarts Draft FFA; Luke Talley, Fort Defiance FFA; Matthew Steven Venskose, James Wood FFA; Zachary Waldron, Buffalo Gap FFA

VERMONT: Patrick Russell Deering, Middlebury FFA; Amanda Mattison, Bennington FFA

UTAH: Steven Allred, Lone Peak FFA; Jasmine Baker, Box Elder FFA; Dominick Barratt, Lone Peak FFA; Ty Bevan, Tooele FFA; Sara Bryant, North Summit FFA; Lisa D. Burton, Bear River FFA; Josie Busk, Lehi FFA; Kaycee Carson,

Woods Cross FFA; Jeremy Catron, Manila FFA; Jamie Christensen, Richfield FFA; Andrea Clark, Morgan FFA; Sabrina Coates, Dixie FFA; Kacey Conlin, Lone Peak FFA; William BJ Deimler, Lehi FFA; Dusty Ercanbrack, North Summit FFA; Tyler Faddis, Lehi FFA; Tara Giordano, Fremont FFA; Janette Gowans Shields, Tooele FFA; JoeEllen Grieve, Fremont FFA; Megan Hallam, South Summit FFA; Rachel Hanson, North Summit FFA; Tyrel Hardy, Lone Peak FFA; Wesley Garrett Harrison, Uintah FFA; Megan J. Haslam, Morgan FFA; Rheanna Henscheid, Lone Peak FFA; Bryan Hooley, Lehi FFA; Cheyne D. Hunter, Lone Peak FFA; Blair Hanson, North Summit FFA; Tyler J. Johansen, Grantsville FFA; Todd Kelly, Wasatch FFA; Tiffney Lance, Uintah FFA; Chelsy Larsen, Manila FFA; Kelli Leininger, North Summit FFA; Chad Alan Lower, Sky View FFA; Joel Mason, Spanish Fork FFA; Nicole McKendrick, Sky View FFA; Kristin McNeil, South Summit FFA; Kadie Olsen, Manila FFA; Amy Pallesen, Manila FFA; Cory Price, Wasatch FFA; Dusty Redmond, Woods Cross FFA; Jason Reeve, Monticello FFA; Amy Rogers, Manila FFA; Ashlee Silcox, Payson FFA; Erick Simmonds, Sky View FFA; Jed Simpson, Lone Peak FFA; Nicole Spencer, Payson FFA; Brody Sykes, Lone Peak FFA; Cooper Thomas, Lehi FFA; Kealey Thorpe, Woods Cross FFA; Brandon Tinker, Manila FFA; Tanya Vanderstappen, Fremont FFA; Chelsy Walters, Grantsville FFA; Brian Wilkinson, American Fork FFA; Cash Williams, Spanish Fork FFA; Jared Williams, Spanish Fork FFA; Thomas William Wilson, Payson FFA

TEXAS: Cody Akins, Fruitvale FFA; Roy Don Babitzke, Booker FFA; Lacey Baker, Anahuac FFA; Amanda Barrett, Humble FFA; Leslie Basham, Sulphur Bluff FFA; Joe Bob Berend, Pilot Point FFA; Holly Bland, Chico FFA; Amanda Boatwright, Cotulla FFA; Hannah Boedeker, Valley FFA; Randall M. Box, Northwest FFA; Katie Boyer, Anahuac FFA; Cari Brinlee, Howe FFA; Matthew Britten, Caldwell FFA; Jason Britton, Livingston FFA; Marsha Lynne Broesche, Burton FFA; Michael Bullinger, Goldburg FFA; Bret Burgess, Covington FFA; Jaclyn Burnam, Union Grove FFA; Charlie Calhoun, Howe FFA; Christopher Cantrell, Chico FFA; Danielle Christenberry, Saltillo FFA; Margaret L. Collins, Lampasas FFA; Clint Cooper, Motley County FFA; Johnathan Cooper, Dayton FFA; Jenny Davis, Cinco Ranch FFA; LeAnn Dean, Rockdale FFA; Denielle DeLashmutt, Florence FFA; Jena Dillard, Waskom FFA; Nick Dow, East Chambers FFA; Lindsay Nicole Duke, Big Sandy FFA; Frankie Espinal, East Chambers FFA; Tyler Fitzgerald, East Chambers FFA; Lindsey Garnett, Dublin FFA; Callie Gilbreath, Winnsboro FFA; Kathrine Gilliam, Quanah FFA; Kyle Gilliam, Quanah FFA; Brittney Goldston, Howe FFA; Amanda Greathouse, Judson FFA; Amanda Greenwood, Snyder FFA; Courtney Guthrie, Dayton FFA; Tyson Orion Hann, A&M Consolidated FFA; Chad Henneck, Cypress Creek FFA;

Roxanne Herbrich, Weimar FFA; Tashena Hicks, Rockdale FFA; Melanie Hinkel, Mayde Creek FFA; Daniel Hirsch, Tomball FFA; Misty Hobbs, Gilmer FFA; Leah Hoffmann, Weimar FFA; Jerrad Holloway, Alvarado FFA; Dancy Hopping, Memphis FFA; Dustin Hunter, Commerce FFA; Jacklyn Jones, Bloomington FFA; Jerod Justice, Athens FFA; Kelsea Kiker, East Chambers FFA; Brandi Kneupper, Comfort FFA; John Tyler Koch, Henderson FFA; Cole Leatherwood, Dublin FFA; Laci Lehman, Celina FFA; Zach Lemon, Harrold FFA; Judson Edward Limmer, Round Top-Carmine FFA; Jessica Lucia, Franklin FFA; Melissa Mahan, East Central FFA; Matt Martin, Quanah FFA; Stephen McDowell, Channelview FFA; Zane McGee, Booker FFA; Justin Meadows, Simms FFA; Jodi Money, Bridgeport FFA; Cayla Ann Monk, Lovelady FFA; Justin Moore, Bryan FFA; Robin Morris, Colorado FFA; Jacob Muller, Bryan FFA; Paula Nelson, Bryan FFA; Dennis Nix, Daingerfield FFA; Scotty Pearson, Garland FFA; Paige Perriraz, Calallen FFA; Trebor Poncik, BF Terry FFA; Nick Popp, Wharton FFA; Cole Reeves, Salado FFA; Kade Risinger, Quanah FFA; Ashley Robertson, Calallen FFA; Rebecca Lynn Rodriguez, Sinton FFA; Rodolfo Hugo Rodriguez, Dilley FFA; John Russell, Nacogdoches FFA; Lindsey Sampson, Union Grove FFA; Levi Sasser, Lone Oak FFA; Jeremy Schneider, Howe FFA; Cody Robert Schnuriger, Clear Creek FFA; Kristen Scott, Calallen FFA; Dustin Sheffield, Alvin FFA; Daniel Spiers, Union Grove FFA; Kaci Starr,

Scott Williams, Howe FFA; Landi Woolley, Grandview FFA; Justin Robert Yancey, Willis FFA

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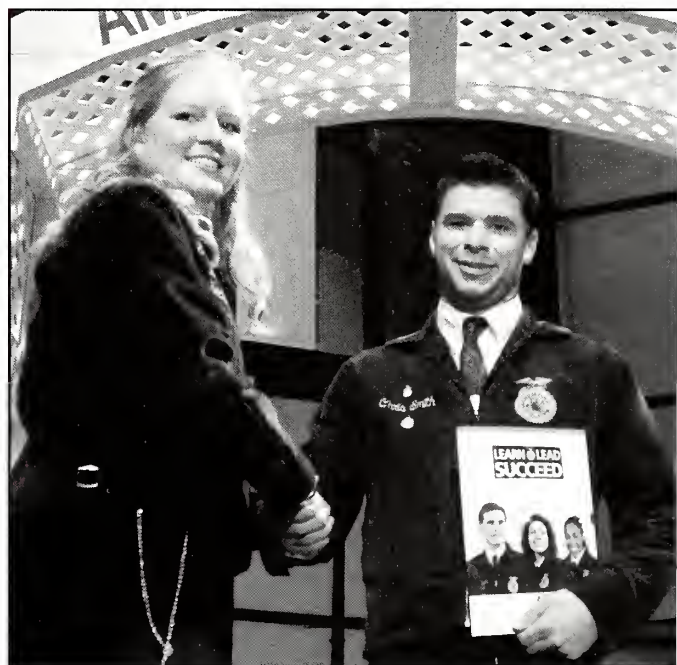


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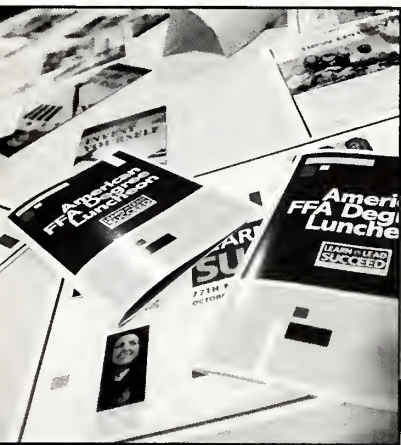


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Kate Zuraw, Suffield Regional FFA

COLORADO: Brittany Anderson, Lamar FFA; Laycie Arens, Valley FFA; Megan Arfsten, Brighton High School FFA; April Berry, Yuma FFA; Michelle Biles, SoRoCo FFA; Tyson Brown, Yuma FFA; Bryan D. Burnett, Montrose FFA; Melanie Kay Calderwood, Ignacio FFA; Jason Carlson, Cedaredge FFA; Raeanne Carpio, Platte Valley FFA; Dale Chelowski, Rifle FFA; Lesa Cole, Eads FFA; Alissa Comerford, Custer County FFA; Brad Cook, Eaton FFA; Dustin Cooksey, Weld Central FFA; Mike Cowan, Akron FFA; Megan R. Creegan, Rifle FFA; Kiel DePue, Woodlin FFA; Jackie Doddridge, Idalia FFA; William Edwards, Lone Star FFA; Keith Frank, Fleming FFA; Jaclyn Gabbel, Alamosa FFA; Paul Geu, Sterling FFA; Casey Gibbs, Eads FFA; Cory Gilbert, Burlington FFA; Matthew Hart, Lone Star FFA; Preston Thomas Hoffman, Eads FFA; Devin Hovey, Montrose FFA; Jeff Kalma, Holly FFA; Kyle Kautz, Merino FFA; Kendall A. Kessinger, Akron FFA; Levi Klausner, Woodlin FFA; John D. Larson, Platte Valley FFA; Kent Larson, Platte Valley FFA; James Clark Lenz, Wray FFA; Brad Lindenmayer, Valley FFA; Stephen D. Linnebur, Byers FFA; Jeannette Lubin, Hotchkiss FFA; Scotty J. Martel, Weld Central FFA; Tara Martin, Lamar FFA; Matthew Martinez, Alamosa FFA; Jared Mauck, Merino FFA; Stacey Mayo, Karval FFA; Nathan McCaffrey, Flagler FFA; Brandon McEndaffer, New Raymer FFA; Jake Michal, Flagler FFA; Tony Mills, Hi-Plains FFA; Andrea Joan Milne, Eaton FFA; James Morris, Woodlin FFA; Kimberly Nusbaum, Grover FFA; Lisa Ann Paintin, Kit Carson FFA; Christy Palermo, Custer County FFA; Amanda Phillips, SoRoCo FFA; Vicki Pitts, Fruita FFA; Linsey Ann Pollart, Sterling FFA; Brandi Roberson, Eads FFA; Raymon Robinson, Burlington FFA; Kassie Lynn Roth, Sterling FFA; Shelton R. Scarrow, Rifle FFA; Tiffany Schaffner, SoRoCo FFA; Angela Schleining, McClave FFA; Tyler Shaklee, Hotchkiss FFA; Valerie Rene Slyter, Cortez FFA; Willy Strickert, Arickaree FFA; Todd Swinney, Hotchkiss FFA; Kimberly Corrine Thomas, Caliche FFA; Jessica L. Todd, Hotchkiss FFA; Ryan David Trosper, Eads FFA; Lyndon Thomas Wagner, Holly FFA; Mary E. Ward, Lamar FFA; Stephanie Marie Wertz, Valley FFA; Brandon Weyerman, Idalia FFA; Cameron Whittiker, Flagler FFA

CALIFORNIA: Alvaro Aleman, Fowler FFA; Katie Angst, Shingle Springs-Ponderosa FFA; Joshua Acevedo, Laton FFA; Craig Bailey, Riverside-La Sierra FFA; Matthew Bassett, Golden West FFA; Kimberly Bedrosian, Fowler FFA; Lindsay Brooke Bennett, Porterville FFA; Jodi Bergman, Turlock FFA; Audrey Marie Bettencourt, Patterson FFA; David Billiou, Porterville FFA; Christen Blocker, Lompoc FFA; Debra Bolton, Kingsburg FFA; Julieane Borges, Tulare Western FFA; Tiernie Borges, Fallbrook FFA; Heather Borgia, Litterlock FFA; Jennifer Borrer, Porterville FFA; Jessica Carol Borelho, Petaluma FFA; Thomas Bottoms, Escalon FFA; Alyssa Marie Brashear, Valley Center FFA; Albert

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Brasil, Tulare Western FFA; Logan Braz, Hanford FFA; Megan Ann Brownell, Santa Maria-Righetti FFA; Charlene Busche, Mira Loma-Jurupa Valley FFA; Ashley Marie Hammock Butler, Lone Pine FFA; Cassidy S. Calley, Chowchilla FFA; Stephen Carroll, Fallbrook FFA; Melody Anne Carter, Holtville FFA; Jarryd Carvalho, Tulare Union FFA; Lindsay Cascia, Los Banos FFA; Jared Jennings Castle, Porterville FFA; Ilayali Chavez, Santa Maria FFA; Tim Cook, Clarksburg-Delta FFA; Vincent Correa, Corcoran FFA; Kassi Corzine, Porterville FFA; Stephanie Cosca, North Fork-Willow Creek FFA; Pamela Coy, St. Helena FFA; Martin Cozzitorto, Gustine FFA; Amanda C. Cristler, East Nicolaus FFA; Max Daddow, East Nicolaus FFA; Ashley Day, Tollhouse-Sierra FFA; Maelyne Sheri Dean, Chowchilla FFA; Ashley DeValentine, East Nicolaus FFA; Chad Dias, Corcoran FFA; Kristie Dias, Lemoore FFA; Robert Shane Doering, Porterville FFA; Michael Dow, Lemoore FFA; Matthew Drum, Porterville FFA; Lindsay Dutra, Hanford FFA; Jesse Lee Eller, Corning FFA; Ross Eskridge, Porterville FFA; Christen Etchebehere, Lemoore FFA; Jason Evangelo, Hanford FFA; Meggie Fagundes, Atwater FFA; Noell Lee Ann Fagundes, Lemoore FFA; Robert Fahey, Madera FFA; Dustin Ference, Golden West FFA; Alexandra Ferguson, Bakersfield-Stockdale FFA; Jennifer Freeland, Porterville FFA; Sierra Taz Frey, Santa Rosa-Elsie Allen FFA; Travis Sloan Fugitt, Bakersfield-Stockdale FFA; Dennis Fuller, Lemoore FFA; Dustin Fuller, Lemoore FFA; Jacob Gallo, Hamilton FFA; Anthony Garcia, Parlier FFA; Nickolena Gibbons-Elledge, Lincoln FFA; Brian Gilardi, Petaluma FFA; Jennifer Elizabeth Gitchen, Chino-Don Lugo FFA; Kelsey Gragnani, Kerman FFA; Brittney Lee Graves, Wildomar-Lake Elsinore FFA; Nicole Greer, Tulare Union FFA; Rachel Gutierrez-Ragan, Dorris-Butte Valley FFA; Joseph Hale, Fresno-Duncan Poly FFA; Shilo Hamilton, Los Molinos FFA; Heather Haupt, Kerman FFA; Traci Haupt, Kerman FFA; Brett Garrett Hearn, Lemoore FFA; Stephen Henderson, Sanger FFA; Kristine Hernandez, San Benito FFA; Vanessa Hernandez, La Habra-Sonora FFA; Charlene Hester, Clovis FFA; Katrina Marie Hole, Livermore FFA; Marcus Hollan, Mariposa FFA; Andrew Hosford, Willis FFA; E. G. Huter, Kerman FFA; Christopher Allen Ide, Norco FFA; Natalie Jensen, Elk Grove FFA; Sky Donovan Jung, Quartz Hill FFA; Anne Kehoe, Tamales FFA; Austin Kelsey, Tollhouse-Sierra FFA; Joe Kemp, Nevada Union FFA; Amanda Josephine Kuhr, Chowchilla FFA; Katie Marie Lafferty, Hanford FFA; Ronald Lagrama, Sacramento-Florin FFA; Austin J. Large, Fresno-Central FFA; Reid Leaverton, Lakeside-El Capitan FFA; Tyler Lemas, Gustine FFA; Jenna Lieby, Apple Valley FFA; Andrew Loftin, Lindsay FFA; Nancy M. Loogman, Ripon FFA; William Stuart Love, Calipatria FFA; Brittany Luhrs, Las Plumas FFA; Ross Macy, Tulelake FFA; Scott Mahon, Elk Grove FFA; Brandon Mallicoat, Shingle Springs-Ponderosa FFA; Jamie Mallory,

Kern Valley FFA; Glenn S. Martin II, Fowler FFA; Jessica Martinez, Sacramento-Florin FFA; Ashley Anne Mason, Livermore FFA; Kassondra Jean Mason, Paso Robles FFA; Gary Maye, Lucerne Valley FFA; Corrine Mayfield, Golden West FFA; Krystal McAuliffe, Bakersfield-Stockdale FFA; Michael J. McGee, Apple Valley FFA; Mike McGregor, Porterville FFA; Casandra Lynne McKinley, Madera FFA; Cody McMurtrie, Lone Pine FFA; Julia Medina, Laton FFA; Martinique Melton, Turlock FFA; James Mendes, Hanford FFA; Jarrod Mendoza, Tamales FFA; Melissa Menefee, Selma FFA; Wesley Messer, Sanger FFA; Dennis Michel, East Nicolaus FFA; Kalin S. Middleton, Santa Maria FFA; Jessica Miller, Madera FFA; Nathan Moffatt, Kern Valley FFA; Juan Manuel Montalvo, Parlier FFA; Craig Moody, Visalia-Mt. Whitney FFA; Lori Moreno, Calipatria FFA; Kristel Morrell, Lemoore FFA; Justin Morris, Dixon FFA; Chad Mulvey, Sacramento-Florin FFA; Britni Nielsen, Selma FFA; Eric Nilsen, Phelan-Serrano FFA; Betsy Noel, Tollhouse-Sierra FFA; Nick Pagliai, Arbuckle FFA; Leeman Joseph Parker, Elk Grove FFA; Joseph Parreira, Lemoore FFA; Michael Patterson, Nevada Union FFA; Ricci Michelle Pedro, Kingsburg FFA; James Pellegrini, Sanger FFA; Casey Penfold, Apple Valley FFA; Oscar Perez, Corcoran FFA; Victor Perez, Carpinteria FFA; Nick Peterson, Clovis FFA; Raymond Eugene George Washington Phillips, Wildomar-Lake Elsinore FFA; Chris Phippen, Ripon FFA; Justin Pickard, Chico FFA; David Pirtman, Fresno-Pershing FFA; Troy Powell, Sanger FFA; Brian Powers, Kern Valley FFA; Paul Thomas Prescott, Porterville FFA; Maria Ramirez, Dorris-Butte Valley FFA; Connie D. Reichard, Quartz Hill FFA; Heather Rhodes, Lakeside-El Capitan FFA; James Rietkerk, Corcoran FFA; Richard Rietkerk, Corcoran FFA; Corina Rivero, Lemoore FFA; Cody Robben, Dixon FFA; Joseph O. Rocha III, Hilmar FFA; Luis Rodriguez, Dorris-Butte Valley FFA; Melissa N. Roper, Sutter FFA; Omar Rosas, Laton FFA; Colette Rose, Santa Maria-Righetti FFA; Morgan Schmidt, Sanger FFA; Amanda Schnoor, Chowchilla FFA; Mike Schuler, Fresno-Pershing FFA; James Matthew Schulte, Esparto FFA; Nicole Searby, Tulare Union FFA; Ty Segna, Hilmar FFA; Beth Ann Sequeira, Hanford FFA; Max Sheffield, El Centro-Southwest FFA; Laci A. Shive, Kern Valley FFA; Samantha Silva, Hanford FFA; Jordan Smith, Brawley FFA; Thomas Smith, Corcoran FFA; Patricia "Weezie" Snook, Clarksburg-Delta FFA; Brandon Souza, Hanford FFA; Chad Souza, Hanford FFA; Joe Spinella, Clarksburg-Delta FFA; Towanda Starks, Sacramento-Florin FFA; Melissa Stollar, Fresno-Washington FFA; Tara L. Tecklenbrug, Lodi FFA; Lindsey Teixeira, Hilmar FFA; Liza Teixeira, Hanford FFA; Jean Michelle Terry, Indio FFA; Matt Thompson, Porterville FFA; Sean Thompson, Lemoore FFA; Hector Tomez, Parlier FFA; Katie Torigiani, Bakersfield-Stockdale FFA; Kevin Torres, Rio Vista FFA; Veronica Torres, Orestimba FFA; Jennifer Tudor,

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Wells FFA; Krista Foy, Willcox FFA; Samuel Gless, Red Mountain FFA; Tyler Graham, Willcox FFA; Anna Marie Groseta, Mingus Union FFA; Nevolin JoAnn Hendrickson, Marana FFA; Carrie DeCygne Johnson, Payson FFA; Tarral Johnson, Mingus Union FFA; Christopher Scott Kerin, Gilbert FFA; Malorie Lewis, Chandler FFA; Cedar Livingston, Gilbert FFA; Caleb Malboeuf, Benson FFA; Nikala Mayberry, Gilbert FFA; Justin McGuire, Parker FFA; Todd McMichael, Red Mountain FFA; Weston Michael, Chino Valley FFA; Dani Nelson, Mingus Union FFA; Holly Lyn Phillips, Mingus Union FFA; Marissa Pomeroy, Mingus Union FFA; Eileen Rawles, Chino Valley FFA; Angie Royston, Snowflake FFA; Amanda Schafman, Chino Valley FFA; Cassie Schreck, Parker FFA; Jessie South, Mingus Union FFA; Jason Standage, Red Mountain FFA; Allyson Kristina Sweeney, Peoria FFA; Nicole Terry, Willcox FFA; Callie Van Well, Mingus Union FFA; Victoria Vener, Gilbert FFA; Tressa Watts, Red Mountain FFA; Amber Weichold, Red Mountain FFA; Julie



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ARKANSAS: Jason James Clenney, Lake Hamilton FFA; Lauren Maloch Covington, Emerson FFA; Amanda Gage, Elkins FFA; Andrea Goforth, Mountain Home FFA; Courtney Hayes, Elkins FFA; Jessica Hickmott, Camden Fairview FFA; Chase Dawson Hilton, Mena FFA; Amy Howell, Camden Fairview FFA; Ashley Denise Swaffar, Farmington FFA; Lindsay Marie West, Prairie Grove FFA; Natalie L. West, Prairie Grove FFA

ARIZONA: Jerrod Alcaida, Parker FFA; Tyler Attaway, Safford FFA; Danielle Bechtel, Gilbert FFA; Melissa Brogdon, Mingus Union FFA; Michala Brogdon, Mingus Union FFA; Ethan Crockett, Willcox FFA; Travis DeMoss, Red Mountain FFA; Michelle Downs, Duncan FFA; Clyde England, Safford FFA; William Chase Foster, Flowing

Wetmore, Gilbert FFA; Alicia Danielle Wilden, Flowing Wells FFA; Beth Woehlecke, Coolidge FFA; Bethany Woody, Gilbert FFA

ALABAMA: Deana Berry, Red Bay FFA; Gary Carr, Enterprise FFA; Jessica Dubose, Smiths Station FFA; Cody Watson Eiland, Eufaula FFA; Daniel Jason Ganus, Leroy FFA; Alyson Leigh Johnson, Geraldine FFA; Marja Lee Jones, Fort Payne FFA; Christopher James Morris, Randolph-Roanoke CTC

2003 AMERICAN DEGREE RECIPIENTS ACCEPTING THEIR DEGREE IN 2004

CALIFORNIA: Jacob Poganski, Auburn-Placer FFA; Justin Poganski, Auburn-Placer FFA;

Retiring Address



Growing up in the mountains of Puerto Rico, I was used to dealing with intense situations. Back in 1996 my family moved from the island's coast to a small town up in the mountains called Jayuya.

My family quickly learned that any time it rains in the mountains, all the roads are closed down. There is flooding, mud

Javier Moreno – “Detours” National FFA President

slides, trees come down... it's a mess!

I specifically remember when hurricane Georges hit the island on September 20, 1998.

We had only lived in Jayuya for a few years, so it was our very first experience with a hurricane in the mountains.

When the hurricane came upon us, the wind gusts were so ferocious, and it was raining so hard that I thought I was never going to experience another storm in my life! As if that wasn't enough, in the midst of the storm, my sister Gelmarie had an asthma attack! By this time there was no electrical power at our home, so we knew we had to get her to the hospital, but the hospital was forty-five minutes away, unless we took a shortcut called “La Cuesta.” If we took the shortcut, we could save about thirty minutes!

My dad and sister jumped in our Jeep Cherokee to go to the hospital. I didn't know what to do; I just knew I had to help my sister. So I jumped in the jeep and went along for the ride. Now, picture this: there was no electrical power, my sister was having an asthma attack, and Georges the hurricane was coming after us. We drove to “La Cuesta” but when we got there, a bright orange sign on the road read,

“SIGA DESVIO,” What?! How could this be possible?

Actually, I was sort of enjoying all the excitement we were experiencing. As a fifteen-year old it was just cool to see firsthand how brutal Mother Nature can be! Plus I didn't mind missing school. There was only one thing I didn't want to do. I knew I didn't want to take that detour. You see, I had been down that detour before, and I knew it was long, windy, and in fact, quite a journey! But my sister needed help, so we took the detour anyway and got my sister to the hospital safe and sound as soon as we could. After some treatment and care from the doctors, my sister was fine. So much panicking, yet everything turned out all right!

Throughout my life I've had many experiences that have taught me a whole lot about detours. I've learned that we must deal with our detours; we can't just ignore them or hope that they will go away. I've come to realize that as hard as it may be, we must keep a positive attitude at every detour life places in our way. And finally, life and its detours are so much better when we have family and friends who are willing to support us all the way.

Back in January things were going better than ever in my life. I had just been elected to serve as a national FFA officer, and I just couldn't believe that things could get any better! After an intense month of training with my teammates, I headed to Pennsylvania to spend several days with some relatives and friends. On January 20th I decided to head over to my school, Penn State, to spend the day with some faculty and friends. I took the two-hour drive to Penn State in the morning, spent the



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

day with my friends and professors, and then traveled back home.

And that's about all I can remember before waking up in the hospital two days later. Mom and Dad walked into my room and gave me a hug. I asked them what happened. They told me the whole story. Apparently I hit black ice, lost control of the car, hit a tree, and waited in the car for help for eight hours! It was twelve degrees outside that night, and for some reason nobody could find me! A worker from the Department of Transportation was driving by, cleaning the roads when he saw the car. He decided to stop just to make sure that nobody was in the car. But there I was.

After thinking about it for hours and hours in my hospital room, I couldn't understand how this could have happened. I had wanted to be a national officer for so long. Mom and Dad always told me that God was a loving God, and that He was watching out for me. I didn't want to question that too much, but I wanted to know, “Why now? Why not last year? Why not next year?” One of my dreams finally comes true, and then this happens. Life's just not fair!

Thoughts went through my head all the time. I had so much

time to think; it was not healthy. But then I started thinking about everything that Mom and Dad had taught me since I was a child. At some point while still lying in bed I realized that I had a decision to make. I could either choose to give up and complain, or I could just deal with it. I mean, I won't lie, I was in pain, but I remember looking at myself in the mirror and saying, "You know what, Javier? Suck it up!" I then understood that to get better I had to deal with this new detour I was facing in life. I could have run away from my detour. I could have chosen not to accept reality, but I knew that wasn't the right choice.

When I look back on it, I understand that you don't have to go through a car accident, the loss of a loved one, or any other major situation to experience a detour. As humans we go on detours constantly! Dr. Arthur Freeman, an internationally renowned cognitive therapist says that, "It doesn't make any difference whether what you face is something that affects your work, your personal relationships, your sense of security, your appraisal of self-worth, or your appearance – the way you think about your situation largely determines whether you will do anything about it and what you will do."

Maybe you ran for a chapter office but didn't get elected. Perhaps you applied for a proficiency award but didn't get it. It might even be that your Supervised Agricultural Experience program has not been as successful as you thought it would be. I don't really know your story, but I do know that as part of this great journey called life, we get stopped once in awhile and are led in another direction.

Some of our detours are long, others short. But they are all detours! Are you willing to take the challenge? What will you do the next time you see a bright orange sign on your way asking you to follow a detour? Too often we waste time frustrated that we can't go the way we wanted to. I think former first lady Barbara Bush said it best when she wrote, "When you come to a roadblock, take a detour." How about that? Simply, deal with your next detour.

But, what does it take to deal with our detours? After spending two weeks in the hospital, I was moved to the Milton Hershey Medical Center for physical therapy. During my stay there I met Josh, a young guy in his mid-

twenties who had had an accident at work. I had been paying careful attention to Josh since way before I met him. There was just something contagious about him that made me want to get to know him better. I wanted to deal with my detour, but I didn't really know how. It was clear to me that Josh knew how.

One day during physical therapy I finally asked him, "So Josh, what happened to you?"

He told me the whole story. Josh worked for a local construction company in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. While working on the roof of a building, he lost his balance and fell off a couple stories. After severely breaking his legs, he had been in a wheelchair for three weeks. "When will you be able to walk again?" I asked.

He looked at me and said, "There is a good chance I'll never be able to walk again, unless they replace some bones, and even then, we don't really know."

I didn't know what to do or what to say. "I'm sorry. I didn't know that." He told me not to worry about it. It could have happened to anyone. So then I had to ask him, "How can you be so happy all the time? I don't understand. Your doctor told you that you might never walk again, yet you are ok with it. Your smile is always radiant, and you don't miss a chance to make a friend. How can you do it?"

I couldn't believe that a young man who was potentially never going to walk again could be so happy with his life. He told me that he preferred to keep a positive attitude at all times because it helped him along the way. Being upset and bitter didn't really help at all. "It's really your choice," he said.

Someone once said, "The real happy person is the one who can enjoy the scenery when on a detour." If I truly wanted to be happy, I had to enjoy the scenery! Why feel pity on myself? Why get upset and go insane trying to figure out the "why me?" Josh taught me that it's not enough to just deal with adversity, but we must also stand tall and believe that it could be worse! Then all of a sudden things start to feel a little bit different. It's always best to keep a positive attitude when dealing with a detour.

Several days after being in the hospital, they started coming in. Hundreds and hundreds of cards and letters of

support from all over the nation. It seemed amazing to me that as soon as people heard about my accident, they were interested in showing their support. Everyday I had the opportunity to open more and more cards from people who knew that I was on a very tough detour. Some cards and letters of support came from old friends; others came from people who I had never met before. I wasn't sure why so many people had decided to show their support, but trust me, I didn't mind it at all!

I wanted to share with you one of the letters. It is from a member in Kansas.

Dear Javier,

Hopefully you are recovering quickly and will be back on your feet soon. We wanted you to know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. And we know with your desire to serve, you will make it through this obstacle. Always remember that God is with you every step of the way, and challenges are blessings in disguise. You are an inspiration to me as well because I recently found out some medical problems of my own, and your strong will to recover gave me the strength to get through this. Get well soon and please let us know if we can do anything at all to help.

I know that all those cards, phone calls, and visits from my family, friends, and FFA members gave me the support I needed, support that was vital for me to get better and stronger so that I could finish my year as a national officer and be here today with all of you.

Thank you, FFA members and friends; this is the power of friendship in action. You see, I can't imagine how tough it would have been for me not having that support from all of you. And that's exactly why we must surround ourselves with people that will support us! It is your choice to begin friendships with people who truly care about you. It will make a huge difference in your life every time you face a detour, but also during the happy times.

We must always keep in mind that in order to grow we must go through detours. Our lives are nothing but journeys, and we do have to make adjustments once in awhile. But when adversity comes, don't be scared to take the detour, and don't just take it: DEAL WITH IT! And when you deal with it, do it with a positive attitude. Never

Continued on page 76

Convention Speakers



Joe Theismann

With a strong voice, an amazing arm and a kind heart, Joe Theismann inspired FFA members at the first session as he talked about his career as a former Washington Redskins quarterback. Teamwork, dedication and trust are just a few of the skills that Theismann learned on the field that now apply to his everyday life. The two-time Pro Bowl player encouraged FFA members to put their goals in writing. "In any locker room you'll find goals written on the chalk board: Throw this far, Run this many yards," he said, "But, 98 percent of people refuse to take a pen in hand and write out personal goals."

PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Linda Larsen

Linda Larsen came ready to share a powerful message with FFA members during the seventh general session about how choices made today dictate the results of tomorrow. Larsen, who owns a communications firm and works with trial lawyers, shared experiences from her past and told FFA members how they can lead with power, passion and pizzazz. She opened up with an enthusiastic introduction, reminding the audience of the important principles behind Learn, Lead, Succeed.

"Make a commitment to lifelong learning right now," Larsen urged FFA members. "Everyday I try to learn something new. That's why I'm here."

In a memorable moment at the end of her message, the professional actress sang a rap song, which, based on the crowd's cheers and applause, made a connection with FFA members. It was easy to see that Larsen strongly believes in FFA and the opportunities it can create for students.

"My friends, you've got the vehicle [to succeed]," Larsen said. "FFA is the vehicle."



PHOTO BY SANI HAREL

Convention Speakers



Scott Greenberg

During the fourth general session, Scott Greenberg, a cancer survivor who went on to compete in the Los Angeles Marathon. Author student leadership books and contribute to *Chicken Soup for the College Soul* inspired FFA members as the session's keynote speaker.

Greenberg emphasized the importance of one's attitude and being realistic about situations and their outcomes. Greenberg told the audience that though you'll sometimes find obstacles in your path, you can't let them stop you.

Greenberg concluded the session by speaking to his 18-month old son, Bailey. While the camera projected a closeup of Greenberg's face on the large screens in the convention hall, he said:

"Bailey, things are not always going to go well. Sometimes life is going to be hard. But it is okay. The way that you deal with it and your attitude is left up to you."



Dave Roever

During the ninth general session of the 77th National FFA Convention, Dave Roever, a Vietnam survivor and author of four books, inspired FFA members with his heroic story.

Roever was injured during the Vietnam War when he was shot and a grenade exploded near his face. He spent more than one year in the hospital recovering from his injuries.

"Life is not fair. And don't ever expect it to be. That is what makes you or breaks you," Roever said.

Roever credits his recovery to what he calls the "triangle." The triangle is composed of friends, family and faith.

Retiring Address



Aaahhh, look at my hair! I can't do anything with it. It's just so flat! It looks like someone dumped a bowl of left-over spaghetti on my head! Yuck!

Who's ever been there? You

Stacia Berry **"You Matter"** **National FFA Secretary**

wake up in the morning with that just woke up bed head. You know it; we've all had it – a cowlick here, some standing up there and a tangled rat's nest over here. Every morning, I get ready for the day, and the last thing I do before I leave is look in the mirror. Questions bombard me. Do I look fat? Is my hair okay? Does this outfit match? What will my friends think? Does it even matter?

These types of questions have attacked mankind for centuries whether you're a jock, cowboy, goth, skater; if you're outgoing, shy, popular or not. Questions like, "am I good enough, smart enough, will I ever be pretty enough?" are caused by our own insecurities. What would it be like if none of that mattered?

There are a few things we can do to be able to look in the mirror and say, "You matter." We must identify how self-doubt affects each of us. Then, be willing to accept who we are and maximize the qualities we already have. Once we accept ourselves, we can grow the courage it takes to be a person of confidence. Then we'll be able to become the people we are meant to be!

So what does self-doubt look like in our everyday lives? You can see it on TV, hear it on the radio or read it in magazines. We need to look like Britney Spears, smile like Jessica Simpson, have muscles like Arnold, or drive like Dale, Jr. Drink this drink and it will make you a super athlete. Eat this diet bar and you'll

be beautiful, strong and smart! They create this voice in our head that starts screaming that you have to be just like the people in the advertisements and if you're not, you're worthless. It starts to close in all around you; it makes you feel claustrophobic like you're stuck in an elevator and you can't get out! Wait! Who are "they?" Why do they get to decide how we define ourselves? Why do we let them make us feel insecure? It fuels the voices that yell, "be like everyone else!"

You don't think self-doubt affects us all? Look around. We all can feel equal because of our common bond of the FFA, but pretend you're back home after convention. When you change out of your official dress, what do you wear? Is it your favorite dirty old hat, broke-in jeans, comfy sweats or your favorite t-shirt? What makes you most comfortable once an outer covering – this jacket – doesn't equalize you? This thought might make you uneasy, taking you back to those hissing voices of insecurities that tell us if we all looked the same, everything would be better. Insecurities are the mindset that says being a carbon copy of someone else will make us perfect.

Actress Judy Garland said it best, "Always be a first rate version of yourself instead of a second rate version of somebody else." Don't try to hide who you really are. Embrace it!

Self-doubt takes on many masks. We must uncover where it lurks, waiting to attack us in our everyday lives. Journey back to elementary school with me – a time of true discovery, growth and cooties; back to the days of tight pants, bowl cuts, lunch pails, hopscotch and stacked bangs. Life was good! Our biggest worry was who to play with at recess! Each of us was cool until someone more popular told us otherwise.



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

In second grade I was the "smiley-est" kid you could have met. I mean I was happy as a clam and not afraid to show it. The cool thing was that I used to have a huge gap between my front teeth. This came in very handy when I wanted to store a sucker stick in there; I mean this gap was massive. I thought that was the bomb dot com! But my friends told me how uncool it was, and so I stopped smiling in school pictures. I didn't want to be embarrassed by my gapped-tooth smile. Self doubt had ambushed me and taken on the image in my reflection of a pursed lipped little girl.

My so-called friends' criticisms made me doubt myself, but did their words really matter? At age eight, I didn't know how to just accept who I was, goofy smile and all. In reality, it was not the Dental Grand Canyon that made me never smile again, but rather the breakdown in my self-acceptance that began to change the way I felt about myself.

Constantly we try to cover up our little imperfections. We talk big, brag and boast. We put others down. We wear too much makeup, brand name jeans, skimpy shirts, and expensive tennis shoes or we're ashamed because we can't afford those things. These are masks that create a barrier between us and the rest of the world in hopes of protecting our pride and sense of self worth.

Those materialistic things can come and go in an instant. Just ask someone who has lived through a recent hurricane or tornado or any farmer who has watched a dark cloud on the horizon. So we have to build upon something unseen, something from within. A strong belief in yourself can't be seen or held, but it will hold you up in troubled times. It looks insecurities in the eye and says back off!

No one is immune to self-doubt; this year I thought I knew exactly what I was good at. In fact, as dorky as this may sound, I love to give speeches. Even if it means listening to an hour-long explanation from my dad on an issue just to write a five-minute speech, I totally love it! This year I decided I wanted to be the perfect speaker. I visualized my role models and knew that I would be as perfect as I thought they were. Then I did as all humans do, I made a mistake. I gave a speech that wasn't a perfect ten, and I was so frustrated! I just wanted to be perfect, but I couldn't seem to say just the right things.

So I started hiding behind my insecurities and letting them get the best of me. All of the sudden something I loved to do made me scared and nervous. I had sweaty palms and shaky hands. I dreaded getting up in front of a crowd because I didn't want to mess up! I trapped myself in an idea of who I should be rather than who I was. Did those things really matter? No! All that matters is who I am inside the jacket – a girl with funny accents and a dry sense of humor, who tells corny jokes and loves eggs with salsa every day and can't live without Hereford cattle. I make mistakes, have bad hair days, and on the dance floor, I look like a dork. It makes me special, not less of a person.

When you wake up each morning, look in the mirror and tell yourself one good thing. Take a minute to think of something positive about yourself. It takes a stab at those wicked insecurities. Maybe it will feel weird at first or you'll be at a loss for words. Find something small and build on it. Learn to accept yourself despite your imperfections because you're worth it. And, you matter.

How do we turn our self-acceptance into something bigger, more powerful, and something that will allow us to truly make things happen in our lives?

Build belief in yourself by being brave. It takes courage to stand up to those hissing voices of insecurities that drag us down. Decide to be yourself and believe in yourself. Self-confidence is like self-acceptance on growth hormones. Rough, buff and tough! Like me, a big man with big muscles. No seriously, it is this courage that will push you to try new things, overcome challenges and achieve goals.

Confidence can come and go. When I was a junior in high school, I had a huge crush on a boy named Mike. We talked occasionally and had even been on a few dates. I was just sure that he was going to ask me to prom, so sure in fact, I had my dress bought and a nail appointment. Now all I needed was an invitation.

As prom approached I began to worry so I decided to take control of my own destiny and check on when this invitation would come. I walked up to Mike one day after school and asked, "So when were you planning on asking me to prom?" He looked at me bewildered and said, "I never had any intention of asking you to prom." He then climbed in his big black Chevy truck, slammed the door and sped off.

I stood there like a plant that hadn't been watered for two weeks, wilting. My self-confidence melted away and was forced to have my dad step in. No, he did not become my new prom date even though he is a smashing dancer. He had to call an old family friend to take me to prom. That situation shook me, and I felt my insecurities start to take over, jumping all over me and dragging me down. I had a choice – get over it or dwell in my loser-like feelings. I had to decide I was worth much more than a prom date. I mattered.

Choose to be courageous. Be brave enough to believe in yourself. An easy way to jump start your confidence is to tap into your talents and maximize the qualities you already have. Think about the things that you're good at. This does not necessarily mean the high profile talents like athletics or academics. What do you do well? Maybe you read, write, speak, or play a musical instrument. Are you a good friend and listen well to others? Do you restore old cars or trucks? Perhaps you harvest crops, calve cows, ride the range, teach, learn?

Maybe you know someone like Jennifer Jernigan from Madison,

Mississippi. She was born with a birth defect called Amniotic Band Syndrome, which means that she was born with only part of her right hand – just a full thumb, half of the pointer, and a bud. Life started off rough for Jennifer. Kids were ruthless and cruel to her and wouldn't play with her. She would sit alone and cry. By first grade, Jennifer was at her wit's end. Her parents suggested that she tell her class about her hand. She was so desperate for things to get better that during show-and-tell one day, she held up her hand and explained why it was disfigured. This stopped most of the teasing.

At the same time, Jennifer's parents encouraged her to start singing because they thought she had a beautiful voice. When she did sing, people noticed her voice instead of her hand. Jennifer's confidence grew, and she started entering beauty pageants. This year, she won the Miss University title at the University of Mississippi. She uses her title to help disabled kids beat down their insecurities and develop their confidence by discussing her own struggles. At first, they see her as a confident beauty queen, but then she shows them her hand, and they realize Jennifer has a disability, too. When they see what Jennifer has done, they know they, too, have the power to work through their insecurities.

You've got what it takes, something worth giving to this world. Accept yourself! We need to look in the mirror, see the positive and shut out the negative thoughts.

Now, when I look in the mirror I see a girl who is rooted in rock bottom truths of family and faith. I am okay with how I look because I'm a good person who cares, listens and invests in others. I accept that bad hair days will come and go and that I like me for me!

Insecurities may rear their ugly head but you can strike them down. You can control your own thoughts. Remember, you're good enough, you're smart enough and dog gone it people like you. Recognize your insecurities. Accept who you are, and maximize the qualities you already have so you can become the person that you were meant to be.

FFA members, look in the mirror and let your reflection be an image of who you truly are on the inside because you matter!

Retiring Address



Sarah was different. She didn't fit in. She listened to punk music and wore eccentric clothes. She had this black and burnt orange-checked silky shirt she would wear with dark gray and white striped pants. She had a tongue ring and a bold personality. She

Anne Knapke **"All That We Let In"** **National FFA Eastern** **Region Vice-President**

was really active in a group called "The Committee for Justice in Palestine." And, she was Saudi Arabian.

Contrast this with the rest of her residence hall floor her freshman year in college. She lived in Scott House at The Ohio State University, which was the dorm where nine out of ten residents were enrolled in the College of Agriculture. Sarah was not. She didn't even know who Kenny Chesney and George Strait were. Where everyone wore Wranglers and boots, she wore fishnet stockings and red shoes. And no one liked that. Sarah didn't really get along with many of the people on our floor, or maybe it was that, many of the people on our floor chose not to get along with Sarah.

People talked about her all the time. People called her a freak. They'd make snide comments and laugh at her. She was the target on the floor for hatred. And by the end of the year, she returned it. She didn't appreciate people's close-mindedness about her background, and it bred hatred and loneliness in her heart.

I lived two doors down from her in Room 315, and by spring-time, Sarah and I had become pretty good friends. We would spend afternoons walking down to the café by the lake on campus and get fruit smoothies. Then we'd sit in the sun on a blanket for hours, trying to study, but we'd talk and giggle instead.

When I came to really know Sarah, I found the differences between her and I to be pretty minimal. Though we approached life a bit differently, we were both just trying to find our place and to find happiness. She was a lot of fun when she wasn't defending herself, and she was vulnerable to just wanting to be accepted for who she was.

I don't know if I really impacted Sarah's life by befriending her, but I know I became a better person because of our friendship. I began to realize that no matter the differences between us, we all need the same things. We need friendship. We need belonging. We need kindness from others. Sarah just needed someone to hold out a hand to her, despite differences, to just be compassionate with her. Really, Sarah needed the same things we all do.

There are so many stories similar to Sarah's that fill our lives – stories of those who are outcast, those who struggle to find acceptance, who long to be included. Maybe, many of us have felt those insecurities before in our own lives. I know I have.

So I find myself wondering, what's the answer to helping those like Sarah? What's the answer to helping us all? What's the key to pushing close-mindedness out and spreading kindness instead? What is the answer? Of course, we are.

That's the power we hold in our hands. That's the responsibility we have. Each one of us holds the key to a better tomorrow for all of us. So, listen up if you want to live a life that's really valuable in our world. First, we have to break down the barriers that exist in all of our minds about those that are different than us. And only after we've grasped the concept of acceptance can we move



on to begin doing the things that really count for something in our world—things like reaching out to those less fortunate, serving others before ourselves. We're better off for all that we let in.

Have you ever just sat and wondered about strangers? Strangers that walk by, that pass you in their cars, that pass by you in the lunchroom? I often wonder about people I don't know. I wonder what their lives are like, what their aspirations are, what their stories are.

I remember the strangers I befriended thousands of miles away in Japan earlier this year. For instance, my new friend Yui and I discovered we liked the same type of music, and we even watched a James Dean movie together. I learned that cultural barriers can hardly hold you back from friendship.

Earlier this year, my taxi driver in Washington, D.C. was from Pakistan. He shared with me that he had moved his family here as they were in danger because of their religion in their home country. That day, our conversation taught me a little bit more about having appreciation for the opportunities I have in my life.

Two years ago when I traveled to Europe, I stayed with a family in Germany for a few days. And I'll never forget the way my host mother, Rosie, couldn't speak a word of English, but I learned that someone can show motherly love for me, even as a stranger.

This year, I learned in

Alabama there are fried pickles, fried cornbread, fried chicken, fried okra, and even fried Oreos. I learned what real chili is in New Mexico, how to have fun like a kid again in Michigan, and how to sing the beloved “Baby Shark” song in D.C. I’ve learned how to be passionate from people like Melanie and Chris; how to live with integrity from Miranda, Amy and James; and how to be dedicated from Heather, Christina and Tyler.

All these people around me, strangers I guess, until I met them. And I learned something from them all. They gave something to me, whether it was a bit of happiness in my day, a different perspective on something, or a realization about myself. I am better for having let them in.

It makes me think, though, about the strangers that surround us all. See, it doesn’t even take traveling out of your hometown to find these people; we sit next to them every day. Think about it. They’re the people who walk past us every single day and we choose not to know. They’re the ones we don’t sit with at lunch. They’re in the drama club if we’re not; in the band if we’re not. It’s the people who have different beliefs, dress differently, listen to different music, don’t hang out in the same crowd as us that we choose not to understand.

How many times has someone you know been outcast because they seem a bit “weird” or because they’re just “different?” I wonder if anyone has ever referred to me that way. I mean, I tried to be normal for so long. For years, I struggled with finding a place I belong. We all have struggles with trying to find our place in the world. We all just want to be accepted for who we are, and that’s why it’s so crucial that we accept others for who they are.

You know, some might say that this notion of accepting each other’s differences is getting out of hand—that people are getting righteous about their rights—that we shouldn’t have to always accept other people when we don’t agree with what they stand for. Maybe it’s an issue like gay marriage or interracial dating that divides us. I say, stand your ground—don’t compromise your beliefs on issues. But it’s when we start letting our beliefs lead to hatred towards others that we cross the line.

There is just no room for unkindness towards others because of the choices

they make different than yours. If you don’t agree with someone’s beliefs, the greatest way to influence them is to be a good-hearted example of what you believe is right. Hatred and close-mindedness gets no one anywhere good.

I don’t believe our world was intended to have people pitted against each other, so it’s time we start breaking down the barriers in our minds that prevent us from learning from people like Sarah. When we can do that, when we can consciously make an effort to look for the good in the person we could so quickly stereotype, and we see how differences can make us stronger, broaden our horizons, and enrich our minds—when we can start really grasping acceptance, only then can we see the next step in how we can make our lives truly valuable.

So let’s talk about what makes our lives valuable. Let’s talk about the big picture.

One of my absolute favorite things in the world to do is to look up at the night sky. The view is particularly perfect from the spot on my front porch swing back home in the “Knapke valley”. I swear I could look up at the stars for hours, my imagination running wild with thoughts about this infinite amount of space.

Did you know on a good clear night, in the country sky, you can probably see over 3,000 stars? But that’s just a tiny smidgen of it all. In the span of our galaxy, there are over a trillion stars, we just can’t see all of them. They are thousands of light years away—some of them sixty times more massive than our sun. And our sun—it’s just an average star, yet one million Earths could fit inside it.

Last fall, I took an astronomy class at Ohio State just because it sounded interesting. I can remember sitting there in the lecture hall, listening as the professor told the story of Copernicus. Copernicus was an astronomer back in the 1500’s. He was the one who first made the discovery that the Earth was indeed not the center of the universe.

That day, it was like I was hearing it all for the first time. Think about it. Previous to 1543, we could look up in the sky and bask over the fact that we were the center of it all. But we know better now. We know that we are not the center of the universe, and the world does not revolve around us. Or

do we? I remember the reality check I had that day in class as I thought about it—how easily I forget that fact.

What is at the center of your universe? Too many times, I find the answer for myself, is just that—me. Do you have the courage to admit the same? We all struggle with self-centered decisions. So many times I find myself focused on the problems in my life as the most important. I get so wrapped up in what I’m doing that I fail to put someone else’s needs over my own. I get defensive when someone hurts my feelings and hold a grudge, instead of getting over my ego and just forgiving them.

These moments of selfishness are not easy for me to admit to you. But I know that if I have the strength to turn the focus off of myself, my life can serve a much bigger purpose.

If you want to live a life that has purpose, that has true value in our world, that makes a meaningful difference, then you have to have the courage to throw yourself off-center. What does that mean? It means centering your life on something other than yourself. It’s having the courage to befriend the guy that obviously doesn’t have many friends even though people might make fun of you. It’s finding a cause you believe in and spending time volunteering to help that cause. It can be anything from signing up for something like “Habitat for Humanity” or trying to listen better to the needs of your friends. As an FFA member, it can be looking out into your community and asking the simple question, “What needs to be changed here?” and then doing something about it.

It’s turning your perspective from an inward, narrowly focused view on yourself, to an outwardly focused look at what this world needs. Imagine the value our lives can have when we strive to live this way.

Our world needs you to find a purpose bigger than yourself. Let your life mean more.

I can remember sitting here only a few short years ago in awe of the amazing agricultural organization I belong to, inspired and excited about what I was experiencing. But we will leave Louisville, Kentucky, soon, and go back home. It’s then that everything really matters. It’s when we’re tested on a day-to-day basis, and we accept the challenges to push ourselves to live dif-

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Retiring Address



When I was a little girl, I loved following my dad around our farm, shadowing him in everything he did. I loved being a farm girl. Every day was spent outside with dad riding in the tractor or bringing him just the right tools to fix a broken part.

Amy Rasmussen **"A Little More Life"** **National FFA Central Region** **Vice-President**

Now, growing up on the farm, I certainly had those chores or "responsibilities" that I despised like walking the soybean fields cutting down thousands of weeds, detasseling corn in the hot, humid month of July, and breaking ice in the cattle waterers during those freezing winter months. My brothers and I shared in the responsibility of these jobs, but there was one job on our farm that was strictly mine!

When it came to loading livestock, my job was to be the "gate girl." Now you might be wondering, what does this responsibility entail? What is the role of the gate girl? Well, my job was to simply open, swing, and close the gate...the gate girl. Highly scientific, I know! It's definitely not a glamorous position, but it is an important one. You see, if I didn't correctly do my job we couldn't get the livestock loaded. I must admit, many times I would mess up in my role as gate girl. Sometimes my dad and brothers would bring the cows too fast, and I wouldn't have the gate open in time. Other times I had the gate open too early, and the wrong cows got loaded. Yes, I remember several occasions being yelled at for not correctly doing my simple job.

As I look back, I realize that at the time I didn't see much purpose in that important role. I would whine and complain that my brothers got to do the fun

jobs while I had to stand and swing a gate. But I grew to realize that without the gate girl, everything falls apart. Even something as simple as standing and holding a gate serves an important purpose. And isn't it interesting the power of a purpose?

Growing up playing "school" in the attic of our farmhouse was one of my favorite things to do. Now, playing school by myself was fun for awhile, but when my little brother Adam who is four years younger than me was born, suddenly my classroom came alive. I was no longer just Amy the student, but I was now Miss Rasmussen, the teacher and master over my poor, innocent, and unsuspecting little brother. My imagination would run wild, as I would pretend that other students were there in our classroom, and whenever they would get too disruptive or not stay on task with their homework, I would use my best teacher's voice to reprimand them.

"Johnny, stop passing notes and focus on the multiplication problem!" Of course, when they were on task I would commend my students. "Sarah, that's your finest work thus far."

As a teacher, I loved seeing Adam's face light up after he had written his name all by himself, or when he was able to solve the math problems I would hold up to him on flashcards. Our entire day was spent up in our own little world, our imaginary classroom, playing the roles of teacher and student, and we didn't want to do anything else.

We all can remember back to our childhood those things that we loved doing. Whether it was learning an important skill like swinging a gate, being a top-notch teacher, dreaming of being



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

a sports star, or saving the world as a firefighter, we let our imaginations run wild! We discovered at a young age those things that filled our days with life and gave us a purpose in our step.

Think about the things that you find enjoyable, rewarding, and fun. Do you enjoy coaching, learning, teaching, or doing? Do you like to show livestock or work on cars? Do you spend your time talking and being with a group of people, or in a solitary setting? These passions could lead to a life of purpose just like my time on the farm and in the attic did for me.

You know, that old fashioned wooden desk with the lift-up top still sits up in our attic. The old red milk crate that served as Adam's chair is still right where we left it. What happened thirteen years ago in our glory days of childhood has truly shaped my life, and it has got me thinking about what my role in life is now. What is my true purpose? What is it that I do everyday that keeps me going and is worth waking up for? How do I keep that childhood energy, that passion to do something I loved, that "life" I had found in our old attic as a little girl? Where is the "life" in our days? Where is that purpose?

Each one of us can easily think about those things we would fill up our days with if we had the freedom to do so. For me it would be going to watch the Huskers

play football, shopping or going to the movies with friends, and spending the rest of the day outside on our farm. But chances are, those days that we think would be the greatest and are the fullest of life, would most likely be pretty lonely.

Sure those things that can easily fill our time during the day might make us happy for a while, but they are not the days that we were meant to live. We were meant to live with a purpose, and to serve others. These two simple things will ensure that our days are full of life and that we truly make a difference. We first have to live life with a purpose, and then give life through service. So, how do we find that little more life in our day? When we realize that the way we spend our time and how we fill our day begins by serving others.

If it wasn't for a servant leader in my life, I don't think I would be pursuing what I've known I was meant to do since I was a little girl pretending in my attic. My dream of becoming a teacher was encouraged by my first agriculture teacher and FFA advisor, Mr. Miller. During my freshman and sophomore years of taking his ag classes and being in FFA, I saw the example of a man whose days are filled with life – a purposeful life filled with service. Mr. Miller taught agriculture education for forty-two years at my high school. The number of students' lives that he has touched is phenomenal. From his unconventional, yet effective teaching methods in the classroom to his encouraging words before I would walk into a room to give a speech, I always knew that Mr. Miller was there for me. He knew what filling his days with life meant. He loved being an ag teacher. He knew his purpose.

It's not always easy to know what your true purpose in life is. It takes time and effort to serve others before you can begin to feel that life in your day.

Eight years ago something happened that caused me to wake up and question my purpose. You see, as a junior-higher my life revolved around playing sports. I thought being a good athlete made you popular, cool, and a successful person. This outlook changed that year two days after Christmas at my church youth group's winter party. The guys decided to go sledding down a big hill they had found, and the girls and I didn't want to be left behind. I sat down on the long toboggan second

among four girls. We went racing down at a high speed. We flew past the guys...things were looking good. But then I realized that something was wrong. I knew we were going way too fast, so I stuck out my right leg and tried to slow us down. The next thing I remember is lying flat on my back, not able to move because of the pain in my legs. On our crazy ride to the bottom of that hill, we had hit a tree. I had broken bones in both of my legs and after surgery I came out with screws and rods holding my bones together. Suddenly, I was faced with the reality of what life would be like in a wheelchair for the next six months.

In an instant my life's purpose changed. When sports – the thing I thought made me who I was and was the purpose for my life, was suddenly taken away I quickly realized who I really was and the purpose that I should be living for. I learned that I can't just be concerned about my own life, but I needed to start serving those around me. This is how I could start living each day with the most life. For me living with more life means staying true to my convictions, treating others with kindness, serving others above myself, and working hard to live my purpose.

It doesn't have to take an injury, an illness, or other drastic circumstances for us to realize what we should be living for. Each of us can simply ask ourselves, "Where can I make the biggest difference in someone's life today?" I believe God has blessed us with numerous talents that we just have to use the way He intended. Knowing our purpose gives us the clarity of who we are. It is the vision of where we want to be going.

We all know those people who seem to not have a clue about what their purpose here on earth is really about. They wander aimlessly, lacking direction, appearing lost. At times we have all felt similar feelings of, "Am I making an impact? Will I ever have the influence to be a leader?" On the other hand, we all know those people in life who seem to be so driven, so focused, that nothing stands in their way. They are so dedicated that there is no reason to doubt, no excuses to question, and no point in wondering what others' expectations are for them because they have found their purpose.

So how do we find our purpose? As leaders this is an important task. You've

got to discover what's important to you. What drives you? Are you living according to that purpose every day? And once you discover what that is, how can you use your life to serve a greater cause?

FFA members, you have been my teachers this year in what it means to live purposeful lives. During FFA Week in New Jersey I saw the challenges of agriculture becoming greater as farmland is being swallowed by urban sprawl. FFA chapters in New Jersey have found they must stand up and believe in a purpose. In the midst of this huge challenge I met members like Heather, Jennifer, and Katie who are willing to meet that challenge for agriculture as a voice for the FFA. From meeting you over the course of this year I have been inspired and never felt more pride in our organization because of the unique purpose that we all have – the purpose of continuing the proud legacy of American agriculture.

Another amazing opportunity I had this year to watch you serve was in July when my teammates and I were in Washington, D.C. Here we saw the Washington Leadership Conference in action, and we were able to sit in on the discussion of service plans. I will never forget sitting in that hotel ballroom, as one by one, each member stepped out on stage and shared with the entire group their plans to reach out into their home communities by serving.

One thought kept crossing my mind as I sat there listening. "This is what it is all about. This is what FFA and life is all about – serving others." FFA members, you are truly the greatest leaders of all because you are so willing to serve.

Another group that has touched my heart this year have been the men and women of our armed forces. As I've flown across the country, I've been seated next to servicemen and women coming home from the war or being sent overseas on their first mission. They are driven by an unshakable belief in a cause that they are willing to sacrifice their lives for. Now that's purpose!

I've found that the purpose of life is a life of purpose. If you want to quickly improve your own life, start taking immediate action to improve the lives of others. One of the deepest of all human needs is the need to live for something more important than our-

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Retiring Address



One night as I was watching TV, I allowed my fingers to slip, and I stumbled upon a TV channel called MTV. Anyone ever heard of it? I have to be honest with you it was a beautiful young

Casey Hogan “The Real World” National FFA Western Region Vice-President

lady on a certain show that caught my attention at first, you guys can relate. I continued to watch this show that was called “The Real World” and while I will admit I had heard of the show before, I had never watched it. I was a bit confused by what I saw, I mean what in the world is real about seven people who are all good looking - I wouldn’t make the first cut of this show - sticking them in a 5,000 square foot house that only Donald Trump could afford, giving them as much cash as they need and providing them with a thousand different jobs? I could understand calling it the cool world or the fun world but the real world? If this is what the real world is all about, then somebody hasn’t left the MTV studio since Kris Kross and New Kids on the Block were cool.

From my travels this year and the things that have happened in my life. I see the real world in a different light. I see it as a place full of promise with the chance of heartbreak as well; a world with different people from different places who believe in different things but who can be united by love and passion. I see a world where people are needed to stand up for what’s right and bring down what’s wrong.

This world we live in is made up of many different people, beliefs, religions and points of view. But no matter what country you are from, the color of your skin or the language you speak I believe the real world will always

require one thing – real people. Real people who stand true to what they believe. Real people who stand strong in times of difficulty and last but not least real people who can stand tall so that others have someone to look up to. This world needs real people who can stand true, stand strong and stand tall.

That reminds me of a young man who was more real than anyone I have ever read or heard about and lived a life full of hope and promise. He loved being on the football field and was not happy when his coach, with his team ahead 55-0 in a first round playoff game, ordered his starters to the bench. The coach specifically walked up to this young man, looked him in the eyes and said, “You’re done for the day son. You’re not playing offense, you’re not playing defense.”

The player looked at the coach and gave him a complicated stare and went towards the bench. Minutes later the coach noticed the same young man running a kick all the way back for a touchdown.

As Pat Tillman exited the field, he walked up to the coach, handed him the football and said, “You mentioned nothing about special teams!” The coach then confiscated Pat’s helmet and shoulder pads to make sure it didn’t happen again.

I can think of no one in America today who lived a more real life than Pat Tillman.

We have all heard the story about how he left the NFL to defend his country. I was touched this year when I bought a book in an airport and in a few hours read about the life of Pat Tillman. Many athletes in our country today wouldn’t leave to represent their country in the Olympics, and this young man



PHOTO BY SANY HARRIS

left millions of dollars to make eighteen thousand dollars a year fighting for and protecting our country.

I find it interesting that after Pat Tillman died many people asked why? Why would someone want to be in the military and fight? Why leave a life of luxury, why, why? But Pat Tillman asked a different question, why not? Pat knew that being a pro football player wouldn’t make him happy at the end of the day and to be true to himself he had to answer to a higher calling. This my friends is what it means to be a real person. This is what it means to stand true to what you believe. Pat Tillman knew that freedom isn’t free and for us to enjoy the things that we do today, he would have to give up the life that he knew and he did.

Are you being true to yourself in everything that you do? Are you being your own person and standing up for what you believe in or are you being fake and keeping quiet when we need people to stand up and do what’s right. I am not afraid to tell you that I have been fake before; I have kept quiet when I needed to stand up. That’s when I felt the worst about myself, however the times I stood up for what I believed in and was my own person, that’s when I felt the best and was truly being a real person. Think about this for a minute; fast-forward your life thirty, forty and even fifty years from now. Will you be satisfied with the way you lived your life and gave

to this world?

Each time we stand true to ourselves, we gain strength. And it is that strength which will assist us in standing strong in times of difficulty. I remember my first taste of the real world when I was only four years old. My mom told me that dad was going away to live in a different place as a truck bigger than any I had ever seen pulled into our driveway. Strange people came into our house and began taking some of our furniture away and putting it in their truck. The atmosphere seemed tense; my grandma was in town and I began noticing that things were boxed up and being taken away. I didn't know what was best for me at the time; I just remember being frightened because I suddenly realized that my dad was leaving and would not be with us any more.

The thought of my dad leaving made me angry and sad. I mean, as a four-year-old boy, all you look up to is your father. So being the hard headed Texan that I am – even when I was just four – I devised a few plans that would keep me with my dad. I began hitting and screaming at the men moving my dad's stuff and telling them to leave immediately, or else. Seeing that what I was doing, for some reason, didn't scare them at all, even though I was a pretty buff four-year old, I devised a second plan. I found a couch that they were about to load in the U-Haul and hid inside of one of the crevices so the movers wouldn't see me. Minutes later I had made it and my plan had worked as I was lifted into the big truck. As I sat in the Texas heat I was so relieved knowing that I would be living with my dad and not losing someone so important to me. When my parents couldn't find me after a few minutes, they immediately began searching everywhere until my hiding spot was discovered. Even though I demanded that he not leave and that my parents stay together, I remember standing there and watching as my dad and his truck full of things disappeared into the Texas sun. My life changed that day.

As a four-year-old curious kid who was into choo-choo trains and Oshkosh B'Gosh, I suddenly realized that in the real world life is not always perfect, and we have to make the best out of every situation. Many of you here today have been through something very similar; maybe a death in the family, someone

close to you being abused or not having both of your parents in your life. Sometimes the challenges are smaller but not always easy, like losing the creed speaking competition, not receiving the office you ran for or losing an important game. At one point or another the real world will be upon you, and you will have a decision to make. Will you stand strong in times of difficulty or allow the real world to overpower you and bring you down?

Since that day when I was four years old, the relationship with my father has never been the same. I could use that as an excuse for the times I don't succeed or make a bad decision. Instead I have chosen to stand strong and make sure that one day I have a relationship with my children that will be strong and never be broken. We know that one day we will have something bad or difficult happen to us, and so many people in today's world use that as an excuse for failure or to give up. What I am asking each and every one of you to do is be a real person and learn from these times in your life and go out and make a difference.

Once we have stood true to what we believe and stood strong in times of difficulty, people will take notice. You'll become the type of person who stands tall, so that others have someone to look up to. This past March my teammates and I were sent on a scavenger hunt in downtown Indianapolis. Our job was to find at least twenty people and ask them a few assigned questions. The most important question of all was tell us one person that you look up to. Now our team was split into three groups of two, and my partner was Amy Rasmussen. I remember telling Amy that we were going to be the team with the most answers and that this was going to be a piece of cake. I mean how easy is it to think of one person you look up to?

We ran out of the meeting, and the first place we saw, of course, a Starbucks. I opened the door, found the first employee and popped the question. No, not that question but this one. I said, "Tell me one person you think is a leader." Hesitation, so I made it simpler, "One person you look up to?" It took her five minutes to give us an answer. I thought she was crazy.

We then went back to the streets of Indianapolis, asking the same question to random people, and again, most

couldn't give an answer. We even found a seventy-year-old woman, and she had trouble telling us one person in her family, dead or alive that she looked up to. She'd been around for seventy years, and she couldn't come up with one stinkin' person? What I thought would be an easy task turned out to be frustrating as about seventy-five of the one-hundred people we interviewed that day could not give us one answer.

I remember one of the heroes in my life, my Uncle Bob, telling me that one of the problems with this world today is that there are not enough people to look up to and most people don't have heroes anymore. After that day in Indianapolis, I found out my uncle was right. I have been so proud this year to serve a group of people who have plenty of great people to look up to. I would bet all of the money in my pocket that I could walk around this arena and ask the same question I asked in downtown Indianapolis and get a quick answer each time.

That's because of the power of the FFA; we have great ag teachers, fellow FFA members and adult mentors to look up to. One of my mentors, Marcus Hill, introduced me for my speech today. Because of this blue and gold jacket, I have had plenty of heroes and good people to look up to. I didn't start FFA until my sophomore year in high school, and I am not ashamed to say today that one of the reasons I am on this stage is because as a greenhand I had two great people to look up to in my chapter. Brandon Hill, the Texas FFA President, and Danny Stiller, an area officer, were both members of our chapter, and I can't think of two better leaders to look up to. They taught me what it meant to be a servant leader and how to give a good speech. If it weren't for them, I wouldn't be here today.

The quote, "you are who you associate with," is one hundred percent true. Leave here today and find positive people to learn from and follow. Find role models who will not allow you to do the wrong things and go down the dark path, but who hold you to higher standards and push you in everything you do. That's what my uncle Bob, Marcus, Danny and Brandon did for me. If you don't have a hero or someone positive to look up to, you will be led astray.

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Retiring Address



When I was younger, I had a piggy bank that I kept all kinds of change in. This was one of those piggy banks that you had to break in order to get the money out. I can remember getting so excited when my grandfather would give me a coin to put

Christy Windham **"Spare Change"** **National FFA Southern** **Region Vice-President**

in it. At the time I didn't care if it was a quarter or a dime or even a penny. All that mattered to me was that my piggy bank was getting filled up.

However, my attitude became quite different when I needed money to go get ice cream. I would turn my piggy bank upside down and shake it hard until some coins would fall out. My frustration would begin to grow when all that fell out were pennies. I didn't need pennies! I needed dimes, quarters, and 50-cent pieces – anything but pennies! As I complained to my mom about my pennies not being worth enough, she said, "Well if you put them in your piggy bank then, you should find a way to use them."

As I think back about my old piggy bank, it's funny to me how I viewed a penny differently depending on whether it was entering the bank or coming out. Adding pennies to my bank was always a good thing, but taking them out seemed to lead to disappointment.

Today I wonder what makes a quarter so special? I mean seriously, what would be so wrong with twenty-five pennies? Sure it might be a little more to keep up with, but what would be so bad about keeping up with money? I don't hear Bill Gates complaining about keeping up with a few billion! Why is it that we would complain about keeping up with

a few pennies?

Let me continue with this money principle. How frustrating is it when you are searching through the consol of your car and you can only find three quarters? We want the entire dollar! So many times we don't like small pocket change unless it adds up to something bigger like a quarter or dollar.

Isn't the change we encounter in life similar? Little life changes are oftentimes frustrating and taken for granted until we stop and see that they add up to something bigger. They add up to shaping us into who we are and who we will become. Our challenge is to accept life's changes and realize that as we change ourselves, the world around us is changed as well.

This afternoon, let's take a look at this thing called change. We must first realize that it's going to happen. Change is unavoidable. But, it's our attitudes towards change that will determine how we deal with it. Finally, let's accept that no change is just spare change - in time it will add up.

When I think of change that happens constantly I think about soap operas. Who knew that your sister could also be your aunt and you have to be careful because it's possible that your boyfriend might be your brother? And if that isn't enough – your sister could steal your boyfriend the same day you find out your dad isn't really your dad. Well, my personal favorite is Days of our Lives. I hate to admit it, but one summer during high school, I became addicted to this soap opera. I thought that it had everything – mystery, drama, excitement and, of course, a bit of a love story. Every afternoon at 12:30, you could find me sit-



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

ting in front of the television anxiously awaiting the next saga of Bo and Hope, Sami and Marlana, Stefano and John, Austin and Carrie, Chloe and Brady, and you get the point. Everyday something happened that created another twist in the plot, which kept me glued to the TV. Yes, that's right. I had become a soap opera junkie.

By the end of the summer, my mind was exhausted trying to keep up with the story line. Days of our Lives had proven to be too much drama for my life. In the beginning of the summer, all of the twists had intrigued me but now I felt thankful that my life wasn't a soap opera. Now it is very true that soap operas magnify and exaggerate the shifts and changes in our lives, but they are also good models to prove that as long as the world turns, change is inevitable.

We will all face change and experience it many times throughout the course of our lives. We will change schools, change jobs, change SAEs or even want to change our last names when our parents embarrass us.

But something I've discovered is that if I take an active role in change, then I get to decide how it affects me. Even when things are not going our way, we must never forget that this life we get to live is an incredible one.

Another thing I learned from my obsession with Days of Our Lives is that not all change is

bad. At times, a twist in the plot resulted in large amounts of joy for the characters. So are we content to be like a soap opera junkie and watch or will we take an active role in the changes happening around us? The time is now to decide how active you will be in this world of change.

The most important way that we can gauge how change affects us is by our attitude. Even when seemingly bad alterations occur in our life, we still have to be willing to adapt.

A change that shook my life happened in elementary school. How could elementary school cause such a shock? Because elementary school was where I first noticed that people had the ability and willingness to judge others. Think about it with me. Before we started school, everything was wonderful. Maybe that was due in part to us not having a clue about homework and grades, but on a serious note, things were great because we didn't know any different. We accepted our brothers and sisters or our cousins and classmates and we even thought our parents were cool.

But then school started, and everything changed. It took me to the third grade before I realized that things were different. There was this girl in my third grade class named Loretta. Loretta was not like everyone else in my class. She couldn't read as fast, her clothes looked like they had not been washed in a few days, and it took her a longer time to catch on to things. Her desk sat right next to mine. I'll never forget the students in class, even one of my friends, making fun of Loretta behind her back. In fact, I'm sure I even said a thing or two that didn't reflect the kind of character that I would want to display.

Now that Loretta, someone who was different, had come into my life, what was I going to do? Luckily, Allison was also in my life. Allison happened to be my very best friend, and it was her suggestion that we should try to be Loretta's friends and even help her to make new friends. So we began sitting with Loretta at lunch, playing together at recess and even trying to help her meet new people. It didn't feel very good to see the looks that people gave Loretta in her quest to be what we would call "normal."

Loretta and her family moved away before that school year was over. To

this day, I'm not sure what became of her, but I learned such a great lesson from my friend Allison's attitude towards change. She saw that Loretta's presence in our class made things different, and instead of passively watching, her attitude became one of compassion rather than ignorance. Allison's reaction to this change made a huge difference in Loretta's confidence.

We can apply the importance of attitude to anything we're facing. Maybe your life is crazy right now because your parents are going through a divorce. Perhaps you just found out a friend has a serious illness or you're worried about friends who once shared your same values and beliefs now turning to alcohol and drugs to solve their problems. Some of you may have just experienced the loss of a loved one and are left wondering how to cope. Changes like these are never easy and do not feel good, but when we face difficult life changes with a positive attitude, then we become part of the solution instead of just an observer.

You see, changing your attitude fits directly in with the final step – changing the way we think entirely. When we began to think differently, we will see that many small changes add up throughout the course of our lives. Depending on the circumstances, changing the way we think may not always be easy, and maybe even a little intimidating.

But, come to think of it, lots of things in life are intimidating, even the ever-so-popular "simple" trip to Wal-Mart! I'm sure many of you have made a trip to this store that has everything with the intention of just picking up a few things, and you're thinking it should only take you a minute.

During my state officer year, I had a 6:30 am flight to catch. I got up extra early because I still needed to grab some last minute things and luckily – you guessed it – there was a twenty-four hour Wal-Mart on the way to the airport. As I hurried through the store at about 4:00 in the morning, I just knew that I would have a quick escape. As I approached the checkout counter, I learned I would have to stand in line! I thought to myself, "In line? It's four o'clock in the morning. What do you mean there's a line? Why don't we open up one of the other 73 registers? I'm sure one of them has to work."

As the clerk scanned my things, the price rang up to be something like \$14.34. Now, I had the 34 cents on me, but in my rush to get out, I just grabbed a ten and a five and took my change from the clerk. Don't we do that a lot? We don't want to take the time to count out some change. We just take the easier route like I did that morning in Wal-Mart. It's easier, faster, and requires less thought. What usually happens to our "spare coins?" Well, mine finds its way into the cushions of the couch, left on my dresser, and I think some of it has been swallowed by my washing machine. Because we don't take the time to count out the correct amount, there is no telling how much spare change we lose.

We can apply this idea to our life. It's time to change our thinking and stop believing that the small decisions in our lives are spare, that they don't add up. How many times has it just been easier to use the answers on the test that a friend gave you instead of thinking about the consequences? How many times has it been easier to spread gossip you heard rather than count the cost of the rumor? Doesn't it seem easier to just tell your parents you won't go to that party instead of trusting them with the truth? And isn't it simpler to hold grudges instead of resolving problems? Just as spare change adds up in our pockets, these decisions add up to pinch the pennies off our character.

The ultimate change that we can create is a change in our thinking. When we change our thinking it represents the gift of unlimited potential. No longer are we bound to mediocre thoughts, but rather we are a shining light that proves to the world that original thinkers do exist.

I have many fond memories of sitting in the same seats as you are sitting in right now. I know what it feels like as the lights fade to black, the music begins, and the crowd screams. It's hard for any of us to put into words, but I know what it feels like. I remember listening to speakers, competing, making new friends and thinking that the experience of a National FFA Convention had changed me forever. But it's not this convention, career development events or speakers that will alter your life. Only you can truly change you.

Positive change in our lives can only
Continued on page 77

National Chapter Awards

Sponsored by Toyota and Land O'Lakes Foundation

Top FFA chapters from across the country put their programs up against one another in hopes of winning a national chapter award. With innovation as the common theme, 30 chapters competed to be named a Model of Innovation award winner in one of three areas: community, student, or chapter development. Awards are based on a chapter's Program of Activities (POA) and how those activities advance the FFA mission. From the national finalists, an overall winner was chosen in each division. Middle school chapters competed for the outstanding middle school award.

Models of Innovation winners

NATIONAL WINNER CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT

Wednesday during the second general session, Byron FFA Chapter of Michigan was announced the winner of the 2004 National Chapter Development Award. The award is based on a chapter's Program of Activities (POA) and how well the POA advances the FFA mission and emphasizes chapter development.

With 127 members, Byron FFA sought to improve member recruitment and retention by sending students to middle schools to talk about the benefits of FFA membership. The chapter raised more than \$6,500 at a fruit and nut sale and held an officer retreat where officers were trained in managing chapter activities. Ninety-four percent of the chapter's members worked on a project to plant vegetables and fruit that later were harvested and given to urban families.

To build relationships and



A Canal Winchester FFA chapter officer proudly accepts the Model of Innovation in Student Development award.

foster new ideas, Byron FFA members participated in Exchanging of Chapters, a program in which Byron FFA and students from an urban chapter visited and observed each other's FFA programs.

NATIONAL WINNER STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Canal Winchester FFA of Ohio won this year's Model of Innovation award for student development. As a development activity, Canal Winchester members sponsored a program called "Haunted Greenhouse," which involved supporting a school event that emphasized the importance of living an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle.

The chapter produces The FFA Times, a chapter newsletter that has a circulation of more than 250 homes. As part of an environmental outreach program, Canal Winchester

FFA members taught elementary school students about local wetlands.

NATIONAL WINNER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Model of Innovation award for community development went to New Smyrna Beach Senior FFA. The chapter was involved in three distinct community development projects. For its economic activity, the chapter operated an on-campus clam seed nursery that produced clam seed for local communities. FFA members also participated in a dune restoration project by growing sea oats and planting them in areas that needed restoration. Finally, New Smyrna students were involved with PALS, working with a special education class and teaching students about different aspects of agriculture.

Three Star

Arkansas: Melbourne, Ola

California: Arbuckle, Fresno-Central, Hanford, Norco, Norte Vista, Quartz Hill, Sacramento-Florin, Tulare Western

Colorado: McClave

Connecticut: Housatonic Valley, Lyman Hall

Delaware: Smyrna, Sussex Central

Florida: Brooksville Senior, Fort White Middle, New Smyrna Beach, Pine Ridge, Southeast Manatee Senior, West Orange Senior

Georgia: Jackson County, Montgomery County

Idaho: Cambridge, Castleford

Illinois: Newark, Seneca

Indiana: Western Boone

Iowa: Alburnett, Anamosa, Benton Community, Charles City, Creston, Estherville, Glidden-Ralston, Harlan, Hawkeye, Indianola, Linn-Mar, Louisa-Muscatine, Marengo, Monticello, Mount Ayr, Nashua-Plainfield, Rock Valley, Wapsie Valley, West Marshall

Kansas: Arkansas City, Atwood, Fredonia, Holton, Jefferson West, Neodesha, Riverton, Southeast of Saline

Kentucky: Apollo, Wolfe County

Louisiana: Ponchatoula

Michigan: Byron, Corunna

Minnesota: Perham

Mississippi: Carthage, Lawrence County

Missouri: Aurora

North Carolina: Randleman, South Rowan, Southern Nash

Ohio: Anna, Blanchester, Bowling Green, Canal Winchester, Crestview, Delphos, Elmwood, Miami East, National Trail, River Valley, Versailles

Oklahoma: Afton, Billings, Comanche, Cushing, Kingfisher, Perry, Rock Creek, Strother, Tecumseh, Tuttle, Yukon

Oregon: Bend, Dayton, Perrydale

South Carolina: Aiken

South Dakota: Garretson, Harrisburg, McCook Central, West Central

Tennessee: Lebanon, McMinn Central, McMinn County, Munford, Portland, Riverside

Texas: A&M Consolidated, East Central, Lampasas, Livingston, Mansfield, Weimar

Utah: Wasatch

Virginia: Beverly Manor Middle, Carroll County High, Randolph - Henry, Signal Knob Middle, Turner Ashby

Washington: Cathlamet, Centralia, Heritage, Ritzville, Rochester, Willapa Valley, Yelm

Wisconsin: Cambridge, Lodi, Spencer, Stevens Point, Waupaca, Weyauwega - Fremont

Two Star

Alabama: Brantley, Enterprise, Eufaula, Fort Payne, Geraldine, Jacksonville, Randolph - Roanoke CTC

Arizona: Chino Valley, Higley, Parker, Peoria, Willcox, Yuma

California: Butte Valley, Fairfield-Armijo, Greenfield, Imperial, Lake Elsinore Valley, Lemoore, Rio Vista, Riverside-La Sierra, Tulare Union, Winters, Woodland, Yosemite

Colorado: Flagler, Idalia, Liberty, Merino, New Raymer, Platte Valley, Valley, Yuma

Florida: Armwood, Bell Middle, Bronson Senior, Coral Reef, Crusader, DeLand Senior, Deltona Middle, Deltona Senior, Durant Senior, East Bay Senior, Fort White Senior, J M Tate Senior, Lake Placid, New Smyrna Beach Middle, Santa Fe, Sebring Senior, Suwannee Middle, Suwannee Senior

Georgia: Berrien, Colquitt County, Franklin County, Franklin County Middle, Hutto Middle, Lowndes, Miller County, Oconee County Middle, Screven County, Swainsboro, Upson-Lee

Idaho: Kuna, Marsing, Meridian, Notus

Illinois: Amboy, Ashton, Barry, Chicago Ag Sciences, Cissna Park, Eastland, Eldorado, Franklin Center, Goreville, Greenville, Hartsburg - Emden, Highland, Kewanee, Leroy, Liberty, Marissa, Mt. Carroll, Mt. Vernon, Olney, Orion, Paxton - Buckley - Loda, Shiloh, Somonauk - Leland, Sullivan, Taylorville, Valmeyer, Warsaw, Windsor

Indiana: Adams Central, Carroll Flora, Carroll Fort Wayne, Eastbrook, McCutcheon, Mt. Vernon, Owen Valley, Rensselaer Central, Shenandoah, Southern Wells, Switzerland County, Tippecanoe Valley, Tri-County, Warsaw, Woodlan

Iowa: Colo-NESCO, Mid-Prairie, North Fayette, Tri-Star

Kansas: Buhler, Central Heights, Chapman, Holcomb, Linn, Pleasant Ridge, Stockton, Winfield

Kentucky: Bourbon County, Breckinridge County, Caldwell County, Central Hardin, East



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Thanks to their exceptional Programs of Activity (POAs), many chapters were honored with one-, two- and three-star ratings.

Carter, Jessamine County, Larue County, Meade County, Nelson County, Oldham County, Spencer County, Taylor County

Louisiana: Bogalusa, Hathaway, La. S.A.S., North Central, Oak Grove, Pine, Ruston

Maine: Presque Isle

Michigan: Bronson, Lapeer County Ed - Tech, Lowell, Montague, Olivet, Sanilac, Springport, Unionville - Sebewaing Area

Minnesota: Alden - Conger, Battle Lake, Kimball, Litchfield, Montevideo, Morris Area, United South Central, Winona, Zumbrota

Mississippi: Alcorn Vocational Technical Center

Missouri: Ashland, Bolivar, Bowling Green, Carthage, Centralia, Chillicothe, Clopton, Dadeville, East Newton, El Dorado Springs, Eldon, Gallatin, Logan - Rogersville, Marionville, Marshall, Maysville, Meadville, Milan, Monroe City - R1, North Shelby, Owensville, South Shelby, Strafford, Sweet Springs, Troy, Union, Warrenton, Willow Springs

Montana: Bainville, Conrad, Flathead, Park, Richey, Ruby Valley, Shields Valley

Nebraska: Centennial, Fairbury, Franklin, Fullerton, Norfolk, Norris, Northwest, Ravenna, Schuyler, Seward, Stuart, Sutton, Verdigr

Nevada: Ruby Mountain, Silver Sage

New Jersey: Allentown, Penns Grove, Woodstown

New Mexico: Artesia, Hagerman, Las Cruces, Mesa Vista

New York: Cuba - Rushford

North Carolina: Bartlett Yancey, Cape Fear, Crest, Eastern Randolph,

Forest Hills, Hobbton, Lumberton, Piedmont, Princeton, Purnell Swett, South Granville, Sun Valley, Weddington, West Carteret

Ohio: East Clinton, Edgewood/Butler Tech, Fairfield Local, Fayetteville, Ft. Recovery, Greenville, Hardin Northern, Hillsboro, Indian Valley, London, Madison Plains, Margaretta, Mississinawa Valley, Mt. Gilead, Northeastern, Ostego, River View, Talawanda - Butler Tech, Wauseon

Oklahoma: Achille, Adair, Arnett, Burlington, Calera, Canute, Drummond, Empire, Fairview, Garber, Kansas, Keys, Kiowa, Mooreland, Norman, Oilton, Oklahoma Union, Sweetwater, Waynoka, Wellston, Woodward

Pennsylvania: Big Spring, Brothersvalley, Cedar Crest, Conococheague/James Buchanan, Cumberland Valley, Greenwood, Hans Herr, Manheim, Manor, Middleburg, Northern Lebanon, Selinsgrove, Solanco, Spud Growers, Twin Valley

South Carolina: B. J. Skelton Career Center, Belton - Honea Path, Loris, Manning, McBee High, Myrtle Beach @ Carolina Forest, Wagener - Salley

South Dakota: Elkton

Tennessee: Beech, Bradley Central, Brighton, Cosby, Covington, Crockett County, Dyersburg, East Robertson, Hendersonville, Lexington, Lincoln County, Mt. Juliet, Wilson Central

Texas: Childress, Columbus, Crosby, Hallsville, James Madison, Krum, Quanah, Rusk, Snyder, The Woodlands

Utah: Grantsville, Morgan, North Summit, Spanish Fork, Uintah

Virginia: Abingdon, Buffalo Gap, Central, Central Middle, Edward W. Wyatt, James Wood, Louisa County Middle, Nelson Senior, Park View Middle, Peter Muhlenberg, Sherando, Strasburg

Washington: Chelan, Evergreen, Goldendale, Grandview, Kamiakin, Tenino, Tonasket, Wenatchee, Winlock

West Virginia: Doddridge County, Hampshire, Jefferson, Ripley, Roane County, St Marys

Wisconsin: Barron, Beaver Dam, Black Hawk, Bonduel, Chippewa Falls, Cochrane - Fountain City, Elkhart Lake, Granton, Marathon, Marshall, Montello, New Holstein, Oconto Falls, Prairie Farm, Sauk Prairie, Stratford, Turtle Lake, Waupun, Wauzeka, Wittenberg - Birmamwood

Wyoming: Buffalo Bill, Little Snake River, Lyman, Powell - Shoshone

One Star

Georgia: Riverdale, Taliaferro County, Worth Middle

Hawaii: Leilehua James Dole

Idaho: Kendrick

Minnesota: Buffalo Lake - Hector, Chaska, Dassel - Kokato, Howard Lake - Waverly - Winsted, Randolph, Stillwater, Tracy, Wadena - Deer Creek

Mississippi: East Marion, Neshoba Central

New Mexico: Clovis

North Carolina: Fairmont, North Iredell

North Dakota: Finley - Sharon, Garrison, Kindred, Napoleon, Richland 44, Rugby, Turtle Lake - Mercer, Wahpeton

Oklahoma: Cyril, Durant, Hooker, Woodland

Texas: Alvarado, Arlington, Aubrey, Axtell, Boerne, Bonham, Brenham, Brownsboro, Bryan, Burleson

Cedar Park, Cleburne, Coleman, Decatur, Fairfield, Grandview, Greenville, Humble, Katy, Kingwood, Leander, Leon, McGregor, Mexia, Natalia, North Zulch, Northwest, Pearland, Pilot Point, Robinson, Rockdale, S&S Consolidated, Samuel Clemens, Sheldon, Sinton, Tidehaven, Tilden, Tom Bean, Troy, Waskom, Wimberley

Vermont: Bennington

Membership Recognition



An Alabama FFA member accepts a plaque in honor of her state association's increase in membership.

The agricultural education model consists of three components: classroom, FFA and supervised agricultural experience programs (SAE). These components make agricultural education unique. In order to receive maximum benefit, students should be involved in all aspects of agricultural education. Three states have met that objective by having 100% FFA membership for all students enrolled in agricultural education courses. States that have recorded 100 percent membership include California, Nevada and Oklahoma. There are 34 states who have increased their membership numbers and are getting closer to meeting the goal.

100 Percent Membership States

California
Nevada
Oklahoma

Membership Growth States

Alabama
Arizona
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Missouri

Montana
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin

VIP Citations

CECIL F. BOREING, a farmer and retired agricultural education instructor, began teaching vocational agriculture in 1949. After spending 16 years in the classroom, he accepted a position with the Tennessee Department of Education, where he served as the Regional Agriculture/FFA Advisor. Upon leaving the department of education, Boreing returned to the classroom to teach horticulture. He has been very active with the Tennessee Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, serving as the director, vice-president and president.

JERRY BRASE, senior vice-president of marketing and logistics for Tractor Supply Company, often refers to FFA as a "labor of love." He has served on the sponsors' board for six years and is currently serving as the past chairman. Through his involvement with TSC, Brase supports a \$400,000 campaign for FFA. Additionally, he is responsible for displaying support of FFA through in-store advertising and encourages training sessions of store managers about the benefit of local FFA involvement.

NORMAN HAMMOND, executive secretary of the Rhode Island FFA Association, was instrumental in developing the Rhode Island FFA Foundation as well as the Rhode Island Alumni Association. Hammond was appointed executive secretary after retiring from teaching for more than 20 years at the Davies Vo-Tech FFA chapter in Lincoln, Rhode Island. He is a life member of the National FFA Alumni and has served as president of the Rhode Island Agricultural Council. He currently serves as treasurer in the Rhode Island Foundation.

ENOS B. HEISEY, retired director of AGWAY, Inc., has served FFA on both a state and national level. He recently received the National FFA Excellence in Service Award for his 25-year commitment as a donor to the National FFA Foundation. Heisey has served as a judge for various proficiency award areas during national convention, chairman of the National Farm-City Council.

DR. LEEROY KIESLING, retired agricultural education professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin, continues to serve FFA. During his tenure at the university, he served as the department chair and was recognized by his peers as an outstanding educator. Kiesling was a founding member of the Tennessee FFA Foundation and an active member of the Tennessee FFA Alumni, serving as president. He has served on the national level judging proficiency awards and was awarded the Honorary American FFA Degree.

KENNETH A. PARKER, Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, has been involved with agricultural education for more than 45 years. As a teacher at West Technical High School in Cleveland, Ohio, Parker taught horticulture and coached many state winning horticulture judging teams. At Washington Park Horticulture Center Parker was instrumental in the expansion of the vocational program to include small animal care, environmental management and landscape design. Currently, he is director of Secondary Teacher Education at the University of Massachusetts.

DR. RONALD PETERSON, chair of the Agricultural Food and Environmental Education department at the University of Minnesota, has dedicated his life to agricultural education and FFA. Peterson has spent more than thirty years in the Agricultural Education Department at the University of Minnesota. He served as chair of the Division of Agricultural Education where he was instrumental in the development of the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council and revitalizing the Agricultural Education Department.

JIM RILEY, agricultural education instructor and coordinator of the Farm Business Management Analysis program at the University of Missouri-Columbia, has served agricultural education for more than forty-six years. Before accepting a position in higher education, Riley spent twenty-three years with the Cameron agriculture program. He has also served as the Missouri FFA Career Development Event coordinator for nine years, assisted with the American Royal/National FFA Livestock Judging contest for 10 years and served as superintendent of sheep at the Missouri State Fair for 25 years.

BERNIE STALLER, former chief operating officer for the National FFA Organization, began his career as an agribusiness instructor and FFA advisor at Janesville-Parker High School in Janesville, Wis. When Staller was named to the newly created position of COO of the National FFA Organization in 1991, the organization was facing the most severe and sustained fiscal crisis since its founding in 1928. Today, the FFA organization has logged a decade of stable financial management, has grown six months of operating reserves, and has achieved its highest membership level in 19 years.

DR. RICHARD E. STINSON, Professor Emeritus at Penn State University, has been a patron of agricultural education his entire professional life. From his education and early work in the field of floriculture, Stinson arrived at

Penn State University where his joint appointment in the Department of Agricultural Education and the Department of Horticulture offered him the opportunity to share his love for teaching with both new and experienced professors. Stinson was instrumental in organizing the National FFA Horticulture contest and still serves as a member of the Nursery Landscape CDE planning committee.

BILLY VESTAL, executive director of the Tennessee FFA Foundation, was an agricultural education instructor for more than 22 years. After teaching, he accepted a position as regional vocational consultant of the Tennessee State Department of Education and now serves as executive director of the Tennessee FFA Foundation and has increased its net worth by 400 percent. Vestal, along with his wife Carol, has established a \$25,000 endowment at the University of Tennessee-Martin, in the form of a scholarship for FFA members.



PHOTO BY SAM HARBEL

Bernie Staller accepted a VIP citation for his years of outstanding leadership and service to FFA.

WILLIAM C. WEST, retired agricultural education instructor, has more than 30 years of teaching experience. After advising 282 State Degree recipients and 65 American Degree recipients, West holds the record in West Virginia for most students awarded in both areas. He served as the West Virginia FFA executive secretary and then with the department of education before returning to the classroom. West has proudly served as the chairman for the West Virginia FFA Foundation since 1987, where he has built the foundation to a bank account of more than \$300,000.

Honorary American FFA Degree



The Honorary American Degree pays homage to those who work to make FFA a premier youth organization.

The Honorary American FFA Degree is the highest honorary degree given by the National FFA Organization. It honors teachers and other individuals who have given continuous service to FFA and are committed to advancing agricultural education. Because of their strong support, FFA is one of the nation's elite youth organizations, impacting the lives of many students. Contributions from these supporters help FFA instill in students the time-honored legacies of premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. Each of the 213 adults who received the award was honored on stage with a medal and certificate and was recognized at an award ceremony.

Arkansas: Charles Brown, Senator Steve Faris, Senator Jim Hill, Ed Nicholson, Ewell R. Welch

Arizona: Dennis H. Fiscus

California: Stanley Hodges, Carl Pherson, Jim Porter

Connecticut: Barbara Feinstein

Washington, D.C. : Richard La Pointe, Susan Sclafani

Delaware: James Messick

Florida: Susan Reese, Terry Rhodes

Georgia: Wayne Dollar, Eddie Kinnard, Harold L. Milligan, Carlton Bruce Moore, Sonny Perdue, Fred Rayfield

Iowa: Eric O. Hoiberg

Idaho: Tammy M. Ackerland, Glen Edwards

Illinois: Erich Gaukel, Dirk Hejnal, Stephen L. Rhea, Renee Weston

Kentucky: Warren Beeler, Ronnie Bowman, Austin Cantor, Helen Carroll, Steve Coleman, John H. Colliver, Jack Crowner, George Heersche, J.K. Henshaw, Donna Michael, William Benjamin Mikel, Harriette Miller, Joe O'Leary, Tony Pescatore, J. Ronald Pryor, Glen Sageser, Nevil Speer, Charles Staff, Tim Tingle, Gayle Willoughby, Craig Wood

Maryland: Ted Albaugh, Ronald Murphy

Maine: Marlene Norton

Michigan: Senator Ron Jelinek, David Krueger, Larry Meyer, Delbert L. Mokma, Comer Skinner, Jack Warren

Minnesota: Elaine Harder, Richard Joerger, Charles C. Muscoplat, William J. Nelson, Steven Olson, Brad Schloesser

Missouri: Dennis James Campbell, Robert G. Idel, Jack Maxwell, Andy Robinson, S. Wayne Yokley

Mississippi: Wilbur Chancellor, Gary Jackson, Jimmy McCully, Freddie Owens

Montana: Kim Knutson

North Carolina: Rick Van Genderen

North Dakota: Gary G. Hoffman, Kirk Sand

Nebraska: Norm Fritz

New Hampshire: Bud Winsor

New Jersey: Robert Gratz, Sharon B. Kinsey, Charles M. Kuperus

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Kouplen

Oregon: William E. VanAtta

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South Dakota: Sally S. Nielson

Tennessee: Phillip Baker, David Boreing, Gina Cochran, Donald M. Elkins, Steven D. Gibson, Sue Todd

Texas: Jane Bagley, Roddy Chambless, James Spencer Norwood, Tracy Rutherford

Utah: Gary Arbon, C. Booth Wallentine

Virginia: Delmer G. Botkin, Laurie A. Cunningham, Edward S. Long, Finley H. Lotts, Linda St. John

Washington: Larry Wilson

Wisconsin: Victoria M. Harter

Wyoming: Jim Schwartz, Leo A. Tsimbinos

Japan: Hirofumi Tokuchi

Agriculture Teacher

Alaska: Tania Spurkland

Arizona: Curtis Willems

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Mike Elliott, Karen Henderson,
Mike Mahr, Lorilee Niesen,
Annette O'Kelley, Jeff Rhiner,
Mike Rourke, Jim Smith

Georgia: Charles R. Anderson,
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New Mexico: Robert E. Booky

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South Carolina: Hugh M. Bland

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Texas: Ben D. Alley, James Born

Virginia: Gary L. Cockram,
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West Virginia: James R.
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Cynthia & Steven Ohlde, Kansas

Mary & Vernon Rohrscheib, Illinois

Retiring National FFA Board of Directors, Trustees and Consultants

Dale Beaty

Angela Collins

Terry Hughes

John Rakestraw



PHOTO BY SAM HARBEL

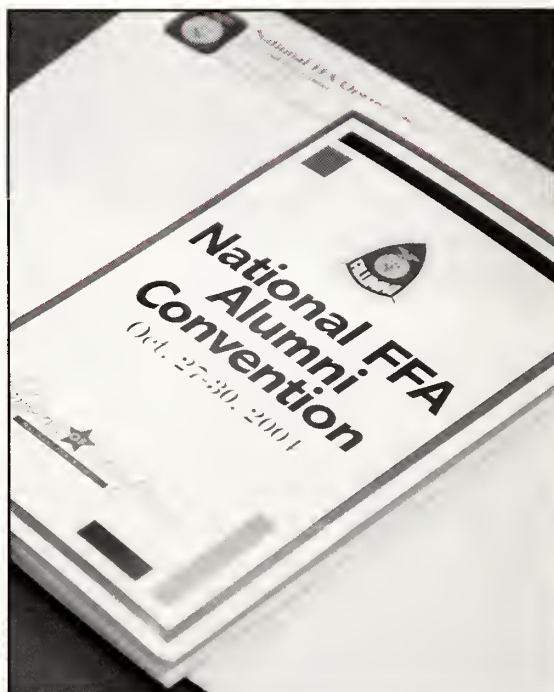
National FFA Alumni Convention



Scott Gimler, Wis.; Mary Lou Cadner, Miss.; and Anita Schneider, Kan. were each recipients of the Outstanding Achievement Award.



State Associations' winning baskets from the National FFA Alumni-sponsored State Basket contest were a hot item at the silent auction.



FFA members might take off their corduroy jackets after high school, but they never outgrow the experiences, friendships and memories. FFA members can continue their involvement in the amazing organization long after the jacket is stored in the

cedar chest through the National FFA Alumni Association. Both former members and newcomers can join forces and add support to ensure that the legacy of FFA stays strong for future generations.

"It is because of my FFA advi-

sor and wife that I have been able to reach the level of success that I have," Bill Van Atta, National FFA Alumni Association member said when asked how the FFA has impacted his life. He is now the only blind private practice attorney in the

state of Oregon.

Van Atta claims receiving an Oregon State Farmer degree, as well as taking the four day train ride to Kansas City for the national convention, to be his most memorable time as a member. He feels the FFA has "successfully bridged the ages of agriculture, industry and information".

The National FFA Alumni Association held its 32nd convention in conjunction with the 77th National FFA Convention.

The association concluded its annual business session, elected a 2004-2005 national council and national president, and hosted a silent and live auction to raise money to benefit FFA members through collegiate and Washington Leadership Conference scholarships. This year, Chevrolet donated a Bay Liner boat for the Alumni to give away in a raffle.

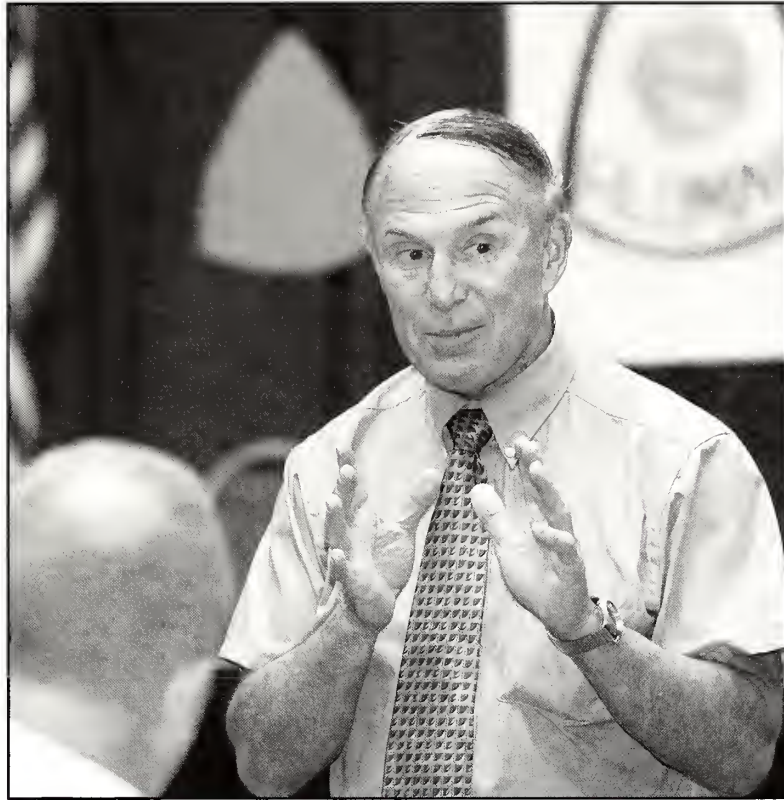


PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Dr. Gerald Matterson presented informative workshops to Alumni members.

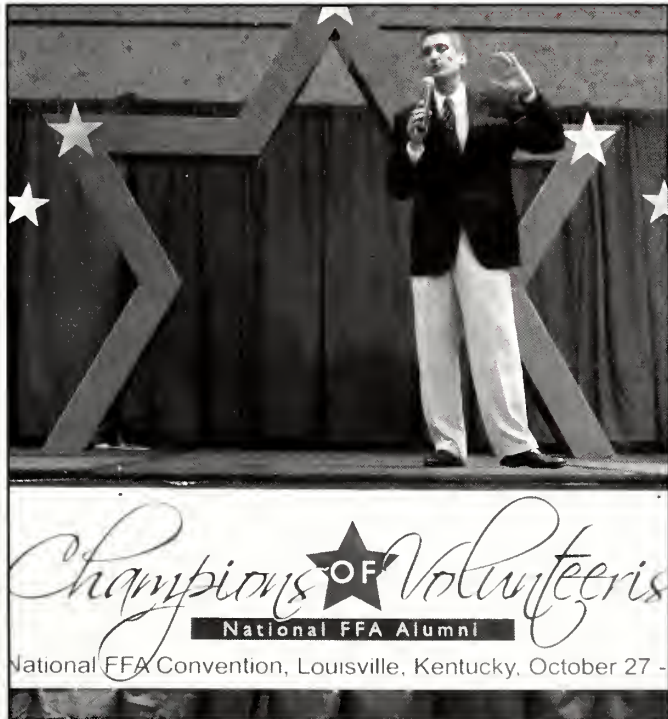


PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Author Scott Greenburg expressed his admiration for Alumni members who make a difference for "all the kids in the blue jackets."



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Shane Wiseman got a great deal on a tractor/baler lease at the live auction.

Foundation Sponsors



The National FFA Organization presented the Distinguished Service Citation to eight organizations that have spent much time and effort in providing opportunities for FFA members and agricultural education students. Representatives from Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest, Fastline Publications, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Paradise Tomato Kitchen, Toyota Motor Sales USA, the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Department of Education, and the University of Louisville accepted the honor on behalf of their organizations during an onstage ceremony held at the 77th National FFA Convention.

Distinguished Service Citations

BERNHEIM ARBORETUM AND RESEARCH FOREST and Mr. Rick Caldwell have provided an outstanding learning environment for the National Forestry Career Development Event for the last four years. They provide numerous employees, facilities and financial support for the event each year. They have also provided in-kind services to FFA by providing equipment and facilities to conduct teacher in-services for the last four years.

THE KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has been a gold sponsor of FFA for six years. They provided general national convention support and have been exhibitors at the FFA Career Show. Through their support they have also provided many educational opportunities for students.

PARADISE TOMATO KITCHEN and Mr. Ron Peters have been instrumental in providing an outstanding learning opportunity for the National FFA Organization Food Science Career Development Event for the past four years. They were also instrumental in funding the Agricultural Ambassador program, which was held the first three years in Louisville.

TOYOTA MOTOR SALES USA has been a sponsor of FFA for 27 years. Toyota supports FFA in many ways including Foundation Sponsor Board membership, National FFA Officer training, community service activities and international travel opportunities. Toyota is the sole funding partner in collaboration with MANRRS, Texas A&M University and FFA to pilot a leadership-training program on diversity education, student and teacher training and community service.

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, under the leadership of Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, has been actively engaged with numerous FFA activities in both Washington, D.C., and across the nation. The USDA has supported FFA through a \$5 million

grant funding LifeKnowledge and other programs. Secretary Veneman has been to national FFA convention and attended several State Presidents' Conferences.

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, under the current leadership of the Secretary of Education, Rod Paige and the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Dr. Susan Sclafani, has been instrumental to the success of the National FFA Organization. Assistant Secretary Sclafani and Deputy Assistant La Pointe have been active participants in National FFA Board Meetings, National Council Board Meetings, national FFA officer meetings, State FFA Presidents' Conference Sessions and several other special group meetings of Agricultural Educators held at the department.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE has been a two-star sponsor of the National FFA Foundation for five years, with contributions in the form of collegiate scholarships, convention speakers and the convention sponsors and judges dinner. Through the sponsorship of these programs, U of L has helped provide many educational opportunities for students. Aside from their continued sponsorship, they have also exhibited in the National FFA Career Show, talking with thousands of FFA members and supporters.



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Support from generous sponsors, like Chevrolet, is vital to the success of FFA.

FASTLINE PUBLICATIONS is a four-star sponsor of the National FFA Foundation and has sponsored activities such as collegiate scholarships, convention Internet coverage and other educational opportunities for FFA members. Fastline Publications also annually exhibits at the National FFA Career show. They have generously supported FFA for 11 years.

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* Retiring

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FFA National Agricultural Career Show®



Every year, FFA members enjoy talking to college and university recruiters, participating in activities, playing games, entering drawings, and mingling with friends at the FFA National Agricultural Career Show®. The career show is a unique opportunity for students to get exposure to colleges, universities, branches of the armed forces, future employers, new

products, as well as and unique marketing tactics.

This year's career fair hosted a record-breaking 1,310 booths with 350 exhibitors. The show featured Chevrolet, Ford and Dodge vehicles, New Holland and John Deere tractors, several fund-raising companies and a tree climbing activity sponsored by Stihl.

The career show also hosts

the Hall of States, where members can stop and chat with representatives from state FFA associations. They walk away from the state booths having learned more about agriculture in different regions of the United States, and with a greater appreciation for FFA's power to bring young people from all types of backgrounds together.



Over 340 exhibitors shared information about opportunities within agriculture.

PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER



PHOTO BY ED ZURIGA

Students were able to talk to agriculture professionals one-on-one about opportunities within their fields.

Hall of States

Alabama Association	Massachusetts Association	Puerto Rico Association
Alaska Association	Michigan Association	Rhode Island Association
Arkansas Association	Mississippi Association	South Carolina Association
California Association	Missouri Association	South Dakota Association
Connecticut Association	Montana Association	Tennessee Association
Delaware Association	Nebraska Association	Utah Association
Florida Association	New Hampshire Association	Vermont Association
Georgia Association	New Jersey Association	Virginia Association
Hawaii Association	New Mexico Association	Washington Association
Idaho Association	Association New York	West Virginia Association
Illinois Association	North Carolina Association	Wisconsin Association
Indiana Association	North Dakota Association	Wyoming Association
Iowa Association	Ohio Association	
Kansas Association	Pennsylvania Association	
Kentucky Association		
Louisiana Association		
Maryland Association		

Exhibitors

Actimax Learning	Easter Seals Rural Solutions & National AgrAbility Project	National Antique Tractor Pullers Association	The University of Maine
AgCareers.com	Eastern Kentucky University	National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE)	Toyota
AGCO	Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education FCAE	National Association of Farm Broadcasters	Tractor Supply Company
AgEdNet.com	Famous Farmer	National Children's Center for Rural Ag Health & Safety	Tulsa Welding School
Agricultural Consortium of Texas	Farm Safety 4 Just Kids	National Cutting Horse Association	Tyson Foods Inc.
Agricultural Marketing Resource Ctr.	Farm World Newspaper	National Education Center for Agricultural Safety	U.S. Air Force Recruiting Service
AgriScience Institute - Cummins Ag Mech Classroom	Farmers for Christ, International	National FFA Agriscience Fair	U.S. Army National Guard
AgriScience Institute - DuPont Classroom	FarmHouse Fraternity	National FFA Agriscience Student Award Program Displays	U.S. Army Recruiting Command
AgriScience Institute - Veterinary Science Inst. Mat. Classroom	Fastlane Publications	National FFA Alumni Association	U.S. Department of Education OVAE
Agrowknowledge	Fellowship of Christian Farmers International	National FFA Alumni Auction	U.S. DOE Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
AGXPLORE International, LLC	Ferrum College	National FFA Organization Education Programs	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency EPA
Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity	Finney Company/Hobart Publications	National Grange	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
American Angus Association	Firestone Agricultural Tire Company	National High School Rodeo Association	U.S. Navy Recruiting Command
American Association for Lab Animal Science (AALAS)	Florida Farm Bureau Marketing Division	National Junior Swine Association	U. S. Publishing, Inc.
American Association for Vocational Instructional Materials (AAVIM)	Florida Fruit Association, Inc.	National Pork Board	United National World Food Program
American Blonde d'Aquitaine Association	Ford Trucks "Build Ford Tough"	National Reining Horse Association	U.S. Rubber Reclaiming
American Dairy Goat Association	Garst Seed Co.	National Rifle Association of America	United States Auto Club
American Farm Bureau Federation	GBC Customized Calendars	National Shooting Sports Foundation	Unity College College
American Junior Paint Horse Association	Georgia Agriculture and Ag Education Consortium	National Tractor Pulling Championships	University of Alaska Fairbanks - SALRM
American National Cattlewomen National Beef Ambassador Program	Georgia Boot	National Wild Turkey Federation	University of Arkansas
American Quarter Horse Youth Association	Globe	Nebraska Consortium	University of California - Davis
American Shorthorn Association	Golf Course Superintendents Association of America	New Holland North America	University of Delaware, Agricultural and Technical Education
American Simmental Association	Hammons Pantry	North American Limousin Foundation	University of Delaware College of Agriculture & Natural Resources
American Tractor Pullers Association	Hanson Aggregates	North American Salt Co.	University of Florida
American Veterinary Medical Association	Harvest Lights Soybean Candles	North Carolina A & T State University	University of Illinois Agricultural Education
Animal Agriculture Alliance	Hawkeye Community College	North Carolina State University Agricultural & Extension Ed.	University of Illinois—ITCS Instructional Material
Animal Health Publication	Hobart Welders	Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College	University of Kentucky
Animal Place	Hormel Foods Corporation	Northerner Boots	University of Louisville, Equine Industry Program
Applied Technologies	Hummert International	Northwest Missouri State University	University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
Aquacenter, Inc.	Illinois Agricultural Universities	Ohio Curriculum Materials Service	University of Missouri - Columbia, College of Ag., Food & Nat. Res.
Aquatic Eco Systems	Indy Racing League	Ohio State Agricultural Technical Institute	University of Missouri-Columbia, College of Veterinary Medicine
Arabian Horse Association	Institute of Food Technologists	Oklahoma Curriculum & Instructional Materials Center	University of Northwestern Ohio
Archer Daniels Midland Co.	Instructional Materials Lab - University of Missouri	Oklahoma Panhandle State University	University of Tennessee - Knoxville
Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA)	Instructional Materials Service - Texas A&M University	Oklahoma State University	University of Tennessee - Martin
Atlas Greenhouse Systems	International Greenhouse Company	Oregon State University	University of Wisconsin - Madison
Auburn University	International Truck and Engine Corp.	Pat Mooney Co. - The Saw Company	University of Wisconsin - River Falls
Bekaert Wire	Iowa FFA Foundation, Inc.	Pee Jay's Fresh Fruit	USDA Agricultural Research Service - Information Staff
Berne Apparel	Iowa State University College of Agriculture	Prentice Hall - Interstate Publishers, Inc.	USDA AMS Fruit & Vegetable Programs Fresh Products Branch
Black Hawk College	Iowa Western Livestock Judging Contest	Preston Farms Popcorn Company	USDA APHIS Veterinary Services
Blue Freedom Farm Market	Irrigation Association Education Foundation (IAEF)	Priefert Ranch Equipment	USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
Boyce College	Jackson Pacific, Inc.	Progressive Agriculture Foundation	USDA Economic Research Service
Breaking New Ground	John Deere	Project Food, Land & People	USDA Farm Service Agency
Briggs & Stratton Corporation	John Deere Boots & Shoes	Purdue University	USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
Bullying Hurts Div. of LRNCO LLC	Johnson and Wales University	Purdue University Dept. of Youth Development & Ag Ed	USDA National Agricultural Library
Burley Tobacco Growers	Joliet Junior College	Purdue University - Graduate Study	USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service /CENSUS
BWL Companies, Inc.	Justin Boot Company	Quest For Victory	USDA National Animal Disease Center
Carhartt, Inc.	Justin Original Workboots	Ranger Boats	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
CARQUEST Corporation	Kansas State University	Reedley College	USDA Risk Management Agency
Case IH	Kentucky Department of Agriculture	RFD-TV	USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service
Caterpillar Think Big College Network	Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance Companies	River Star Farms	Venturing Division, Boy Scouts of America
Cave City Tourist & Convention Center	Kentucky Poultry Federation	Rose Acre Farms, Inc.	Vidalia Sweet Onions for Education Program
Central Florida Community College	Kentucky Soybean Association	Safari Club International Foundation	Virginia Tech, Agricultural and Extension Education
Central Missouri State University	Keystone Steel & Wire Company	Shaffer's Goldrush	Visual Impact Imaging
Ceres International Women's Fraternity	King Kutter Inc.	Shamrock Greyhound Placement	Ward's Natural Science
Chadron State College	Kosair Charities	Shell Lubricants	West Virginia University
Chevrolet	Kraft Foods Global, Inc.	Sigma Alpha Professional Agriculture Sorority	Western Kentucky University
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Christian Kropf, Inc.	Land O'Lakes/Purina	Society of American Foresters	Winchester Ammunition-Olin Corporation
CHS	Langdon Barber Groves, Inc.	South Dakota State University	WIX Filters Products Division of Dana Corporation
Clemson University	Lehi Valley Trading Co.	Southern Arkansas University	Wrangler
College Courses for High Schools	Lexington Convention & Visitors Bureau	Southern Heritage Fundraising	WyoTech
Colorado State University - College of Agricultural Sciences	Lincoln Electric Company	Southwest Missouri State University - Collegiate FFA	Zeecraft Tech.
Continental Kennel Club	Lincoln Technical Institute	Stihl, Inc.	
Cornell University	Louisiana State University	Stone Manufacturing & Supply Company	
Crosman Airguns	Ludy Greenhouse Manufacturers	Stuppy Greenhouse Manufacturing Company	
Cummins, Inc.	Mason County Fiscal Court	SUNY Cobleskill	
Dee Zee Manufacturing	Master Plans & Designs	Superior Growers Supply	
Delaware State University	Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition	Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education	
Delaware Valley College	Michigan State University	Tennessee Tech University	
Delmar Learning	Mississippi State University	The Appaloosa Horse Club	
Depco LLC	Missouri Fox Trotting Horse Breed Association	The Davey Tree Expert Company	
Des Moines Area Community College	Missouri Welding Institute	The Fraternity of Alpha Zeta	
Diane's Fundraising LLC	Monsanto Company	The Ohio State University, Agricultural Education	
Dickies Footwear	Morehead State University	The Ohio State University Dept. of Food, Ag & Enviro. Sci.	
Diversified Fund Raisers, Inc./Country Meats	Morton Salt	The Pennsylvania State University	
Dodge Trucks	MTD Products, Inc./Cub Cadet	The Stock Market Game Program	
Dordt College	Murray State University		
Dow AgroSciences	NAPA AUTO PARTS		
DuPont	Nashville Auto-Diesel College		
Durango Boot	National Agricultural Aviation Association		

Courtesy Corps



Courtesy Corps members put "Living to Serve" in action.

Alaska: Homer FFA, Ninilchik FFA

Alabama: Bibb County Forestry FFA Billingsley FFA, Kinston FFA, Marbury FFA, Shelby County High School FFA, Wetumpka FFA

Arkansas: Blytheville FFA, England FFA, Stuttgart FFA

Arizona: Mesquite FFA

California: Yucaipa Sr. FFA

Connecticut: Lyman Hall FFA

Delaware: Caesar Rodney FFA, Middletown FFA, Sussex Central High School FFA

Florida: Baker County Sr. FFA, Brooksville Sr. FFA, Hernando Central FFA, Lake Gibson Sr. FFA, Lakeland FFA, Lakewood Ranch FFA, North Marion FFA, Southeast Manatee FFA, Winter Haven High School FFA

Georgia: Etowah High School FFA, Jonesboro High School FFA, Morgan County FFA, Riverdale FFA, Southeast Whitfield FFA, Tift Co. FFA,

Iowa: Akron-Westfield FFA, Cascade FFA, Fairfield FFA, Iowa State University FFA, Linn-Mar FFA, Louisa-Muscatine FFA, New Hampton FFA,

Idaho: Kendrick FFA,

Illinois: Clay City FFA, Georgetown Ridge Farm FFA, Liberty FFA, Minooka FFA,

Indiana: Indian Creek FFA, North Newton FFA, Rushville FFA, South Ripley FFA, Woodlan FFA

Kansas: Buhler FFA, Hill City FFA, Ulysses FFA

Kentucky: Apollo High School FFA, Butler County FFA, Christian County FFA, John Hardin FFA, LaRue County FFA, Lee County FFA, Lincoln County FFA, Mason County, Meade County FFA, Nelson FFA, Nicholas County FFA, Ryle High FFA

Louisiana: Mt. Hermon FFA, Pearl River FFA, St. James FFA,

Masachusetts: Norfolk FFA

Maryland: Maryland FFA Association

Michigan: Allegan County Tech Ed Center FFA

Minnesota: Sibley East FFA

Mississippi: Bruce FFA

Missouri: Advance FFA, Belle FFA, Benton FFA, Billings FFA, Carl Junction FFA, Couch FFA, Gallatin FFA, Greenfield FFA, Hamilton FFA, Higginsville FFA, Lamar FFA, Mansfield FFA, Mount Vernon FFA, Norborne FFA, North Central Career Center FFA, Northwest Technical School FFA, Pierce City FFA, Plattsburg, Smithville FFA, South Nodaway FFA, Vernoia FFA

North Carolina: Northwest Cabarrus FFA, Red Springs FFA, South Granville FFA

North Dakota: Beulah FFA, Hazen FFA, Kenmare FFA, New Salem FFA

Nebraska: Hartington FFA

New Hampshire: Winnisquam FFA

New Jersey: Penns Grove FFA, Warren Hills FFA

New Mexico: Las Cruces FFA

New York: Argyle FFA, Letchworth FFA

Ohio: Fairbanks FFA, Four County FFA, Talawanda FFA, Tolles Technical Center FFA, Vantage FFA, Warren FFA

Oklahoma: Altus FFA Eldorado FFA, Elk City FFA, Frederick FFA, Hardesty FFA, Jenks FFA, Tecumseh FFA

Oregon: Amity FFA, Molalla FFA, Perrydale FFA, Willamina FFA

Pennsylvania: Big Spring FFA, Comberland Valley FFA, Eastern York FFA, Meyersdale FFA

Puerto Rico: S.U. Manuel Mendia Moret

South Carolina: Edisto FFA

South Dakota: Bennett County FFA, Centerville FFA, Harrisburg FFA, McCook Central FFA

A dedication to true service made up the heart of the 77th National FFA Convention Courtesy Corps. FFA members and advisors from all over the country volunteered their time and effort to assist convention staff in a variety of activities. From helping out in the awards office to securing the doors, courtesy corps are a vital part of behind-the-scenes work. The experience of serving proved to be worthwhile for many members. FFA sincerely thanks those who volunteered. Each participant helped make national convention a success.

Tennessee: Bolivar Central FFA, Brighton FFA, Houston FFA, Mark Twain FFA, Spring Hill FFA, Station Camp FFA

Texas: Bellaire FFA, Bland FFA, Bowie FFA, Breckenridge FFA, Bryan FFA, Burkeville FFA, C.H. Yoe FFA, Calallen FFA, Caney Creek FFA, Celeste FFA, Clear Creek FFA, Colorado FFA, Columbus FFA, Commerce FFA, Cypress Creek FFA, Decatur FFA, Dublin FFA, Elgin FFA, Era FFA, Franklin FFA, Glen Rose FFA, Hale Center FFA, Harmony FFA, Hartley FFA, Kirbyville FFA, Lone Oak FFA, Mabank FFA, Madisonville FFA, Mansfield FFA, Northwest FFA, Pasadena High School FFA, Plano FFA, Quinlan FFA, Sinton FFA, Snyder FFA, Tulo-so-Midway FFA, Weimar FFA

Virginia: Blacksburg High FFA, Christiansburg High School, Giles FFA, Signal Knob Middle FFA

Washington: Dayton FFA, Eastmont FFA, Evergreen FFA, Heritage FFA, Wapato FFA

Wisconsin: Brookwood FFA, Cashton FFA, Kiel FFA, Osseo-Fairchild FFA, Waupaca FFA

West Virginia: West Virginia FFA Association

Official Delegates



PHOTO BY SARA HARREL

Delegates shared ideas and debated issues in their efforts to keep FFA growing strong.

A team of 475 FFA delegate leaders arrived in Louisville early in the week to practice one of our country's founding principles – democracy. The delegate group was composed of state and district officers who were divided into six strategic planning committees.

The strategic planning sessions allow students to work with members from around the nation who represent a diverse range of viewpoints. Students learn the value of compromise while practicing their parliamentary procedure skills.

"The success of the committee does not lie in the decision that they reach," said Jim Scott, the delegation section advisor. "The true success is in the discussion."

The issues this year's delegate committees faced included the creation of a bi-cameral delegate assembly, clarification of FFA membership requirements, improvement of official dress at national convention, change in the reporter's part in opening ceremonies, the institution of a

national service project, and increasing non-traditional student enrollment. The suggested changes derived from the State Presidents' Conference which was held in Washington, D.C., in July.

After the committees were formed, the group spent time reviewing existing information and discussing opinions. Each committee then formed recommendations and submitted them to the entire delegation for a vote. The delegation recommendations were then forwarded to the National FFA Board of Directors, who review them each January.

Alabama: Alicia Butts⁶, Bradley Camp³, Brittany Beasley², Jared Beasley¹, Jennifer Himburg⁵, Joanna Stewart¹, Katie Gann³, Marc Manning⁵, Matt Barton², Michael Roach⁴

Alaska: Jessica Nolin⁴, Theresa Feighery⁶

Arizona: Janette Barnard⁶, Jen Oseland⁵, Jenna Clark¹, Kristi Rhodes³

Arkansas: Amber Uzdrowski², Beth Harvey⁵, Brett Ausley³, Cari Jo Parker³, Casey Simpson¹, Cassie Bacon⁵, Chelsea Kennedy⁶, Dru Glaze¹, Jason Davis⁶, John Crangle⁵, Paul Stanberry⁴, Randy Renfro¹, Tiffany Kirklin²

California: Andrea Jue⁶, Ashley Bacon¹, Ashley Walley³, Beatriz Campuzano³, Beau Erratebere⁵, Ben Wright², Beth Cundiff⁶, Bobbi Jean Freeman⁴, Bruce Fucillo⁵, Carey Galliani⁴, Carrie Crane³, Casey Regan⁶, Christopher Bettencourt³, Colette Rose², Colleen Bartlett¹, Courtney Serafin², Daniel Bays², Daniel Fishman⁴, Daniel Schultz¹, Darren Leach⁵, Erica Flores³, Erin Van Peer², Forest Ward², George Azar⁴, Grace Berryhill⁵, Ivan Copado², Jenny Bertagna³, Jesse Garcia⁶, Jim Pierce⁶, Katie Robertson³, Kelsey Blagg⁴, Kelsey Rice¹, Laura Hewitt⁵, Lindsay Walsh⁴, Lisa Hammerich⁵, Luke Wenger³, Marcus Hollan², Margaret Leonardi¹, Mark Diener⁴, Megan Brownell⁵, Melissa Haines⁴, Melissa Lema⁶, Nicholas Traini¹, Nicolina Prestininzi¹, Sarah Hubbard⁶, Stephanie Brander¹, Stephanie Obad⁶, Stephen Perry¹, Thomas Bottoms⁶



Colorado: Alissa Comerford⁵, Jamie Cecil⁶, Megan McEndaffer⁴, Tucker Louthan², Tyson Brown¹

Connecticut: Gina Gambino⁶, Mindy Cane⁴, Missy Chick⁵, Nicholas Stanisci¹

Delaware: Hallie Thompson⁶, Mollie Stevenson⁵, Nicole Curran⁴

Florida: Alonda McCarty¹, Erica Der¹, Erin Stoutamire², Evie Lane⁶, Hope Sullenberger⁶, Hunter Fugate³, Jenna Greene³, Laura Fowler³, Melissa Hinton⁵, Mikey Miley⁴, Raymon Land², Tori Lyons⁶

Georgia: Alex Hicks¹, Amanda Zittrouer⁴, Anna Bellamy⁵, Ashley Carter¹, Ashley Seamon², Cathy Strickland¹, Cliff Tipples², Dathan Harbert¹, Davis Whiten⁶, Gretchen Fortner², Heather Savelle⁴, Jeri Anna Guthrie³, Lisa Mullinax⁶, Meredith Carey⁴, Michael Maw³, Paul Ruddell⁶, Paula Rogers⁵, Rand Merchant⁵, Ransom McArthur⁴, Renee Smith², Rodney Redd¹



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Delegates make sure the voices of their state's members are heard at the national convention.

Hawaii: Denna Macanas⁶, Jackie Akuna³

Idaho: Beck Bevan⁶, George Hafez², Heidi Lake³, Jessie Kellogg⁴, Tyler Zollinger⁵

Illinois: Anna Ziegler², Ashley Hanold¹, Becky Littlefield¹, Bryan Schullian⁴, Cliff Dolbeare², Dane Hunter¹, Emmalee Brink², Jaqueline Fenn⁶, Kacy Baugher⁴, Kasie Dillow³, Kayla King⁴, Natalie Coers⁵, Seth Richolson³, Shana Stine⁶, Stacey Rohrscheib⁵

Indiana: Eric Barnard¹, Jennifer Shepherd¹, Jill Steiner³, Joey Dunn², Joni Naylor⁶, Matthew Metzger⁶, Sara Egan⁴, Todd Ault⁵

Iowa: Ashley Jordan³, Jenna Maubach⁶, Jessica Shifflett², Jim Fitzgerald¹, Josh Rinderknecht³, Mariah Elefson², Michael Cooley⁵, Nicole Linkin⁴, Shamus Brown⁴

Kansas: Blair Bryant⁵, Dan Atkisson², Jarrod Bowser⁶, John Bergin¹, Leah Mattix³, Sarah Sexton⁴

Kentucky: Adam French⁵, Andrew Osborne¹, Bradley Henderson², Brandi Brawner³, Brian Prewitt⁶, Brittany Wilkinson⁴, Charlee Doom⁵, Coty Back⁴, Matthew Anderson⁶, Sara Jo Greene¹, Sarah Baker⁵, Thomas Stevens², Whitney Grubb⁶

Louisiana: Amanda Bourgeois⁶, Cade Le Jeune², Chris Head⁵, Danielle Beard¹, Emily Hand⁴, Lindsay Lutes³, Nikki Savell⁶, Shawn Zeringue³, Trae Schneider⁵, Tyler Landry⁴

Maine: Britney Lavoie⁴, Brittany McLaughlin³

Maryland: Justin Tusing⁶, Katie Cook⁴, Oscar Ramirez¹

Massachusetts: Bethany Evangelista², Brianne Crowley³, Rachel Labbee⁵

Michigan: Doug Albright², Jacob Riske³, Matt Jakubik¹, Melissa Smith⁴, Ryan Kramer⁶, Steven Darke⁵

Minnesota: Cara Soper², Crystal Fluegge², Jeff Buyck⁶, Kayla Pearson⁶, Krystal Anderson³, Rachel Dummer⁴, Rachel Wulf¹, Steven Resler⁵, Vanessa Magnus⁵

Mississippi: Amber Johnson⁴, Avangelia Kirkland⁶, Cody Greer³, Kayla Coggins⁵, Riley Roebuck²

Missouri: Allyssa Berry², Brian Martin¹, Erica Dean⁶, Gary Slayton², Gina Eckler³, Hilary Holeman³, Jaclyn DeWeese¹, James Kaiser⁴, Josh Erisman², Keva Hulsey⁶, Laura Puchbauer⁶, Nathaniel Storm⁵, Rebecca Williams⁵, Susan Bernrt⁴

Montana: Amy Plummer⁵, Andy Vukonich⁵, Josh Perkins⁴, Matt Pugh³

Nebraska: Abbie Warren⁶, Anita Estes⁵, Jon Lechtenberg⁴, Lauren Gemar³, Pam Pohlmann¹, Philip Mueller², Shelly Kubicek³

Nevada: George Pomeroy¹, Jessie Vipham⁵, Lauren Forbus⁶

New Hampshire: Jennifer Hepworth⁴, Jessica Hodgeman⁶, Theresa Sandholm¹

New Jersey: Anthony Frisko¹, Heather White⁶, Rebecca Schnetzer²

New Mexico: Chris Arrigo⁵, Clifton Butt⁴, Ginger Goodan², Jamie Gerard³, Levi Downey⁶

New York: Bill Hamilton⁵, Christine Riordan³, Jessica Goblet⁶, Lucas Irwin², Matt Sidoti¹

North Carolina: Amber Bullard⁴, Andrew Daniel¹, April Cain³, Ben Berg², Casey Richardson⁶, Crystal Mitchell³, Heather Wade², Imogene Davis⁵, Jamie Langston¹, Jennifer Peters¹, Justin Moore⁵, Laura Hoffner⁵, Tanisha Glover⁶, Ted Clayton⁴

North Dakota: Aaron Walsh⁵, Brooks Hetle³, Jonathan Odermann⁶, Paige Haugland⁴, Rebecca Tokach¹, Stephanie Lee²

Ohio: Amanda Gamble⁶, Chip Shannon¹, Dan Clinker⁶, Darlene Scheid², Debra Van Camp¹, Hilary Bailey¹, Jamie Zimmer⁵, Jared Bauman³, Jessica Slone³, Jody Poth⁴, Julie Watson², Libby Duncan⁵, Molly Laughlin⁵, Rose Dudgeon³, Tim Lamb²

Oklahoma: Amber Rose, Bethany Anderson⁴, Blake Bixler, Cale Walker², Chancey Redgate, Chase Turner, Clayton Smith¹, Cortney Timmons³, Dallas Krout, Erin Luke, Jamie Brown, Jerrod Lundry, John Hudson, Jordan Russell, Mason Bolay, Mike McDaniel², Nathan Johnson, Shawn Murphy, Shawna Allen⁵, Tyler Norvell, Whitney Danker⁶

Oregon: Braden Groth³, Brittany Sintek⁶, Cole Pritchard¹, Jared Collins², Lindsey Vincent⁴

Pennsylvania: Amy Staffer⁶, Kenny Stanton², Mark Lowery¹, Michael Hess⁴, Mike Woods³, Sara Gutshall⁵, Sara Quigg³, Tara Miller⁴

Puerto Rico: Adriana Melendez², Amilcar Gonzalez⁴, Joelo McKieo

Rhode Island: Leah Adams⁴, Ryan Shoener¹

South Carolina: Ashley King⁵, Ethan Sansbury⁶, Jamie Hughes¹, Jennifer Perkins², Jonathan Dorn³, Josh O'Rear⁴

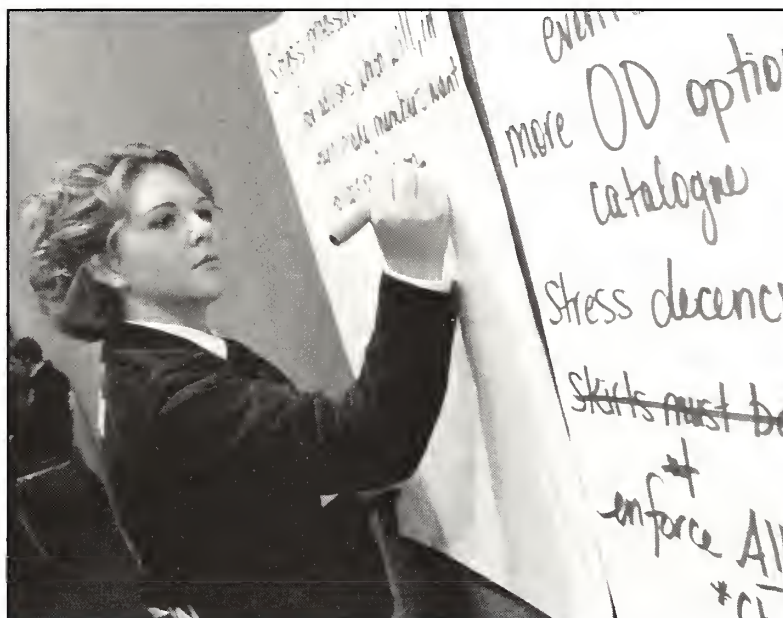
South Dakota: Alex Welk⁴, Crissa Zenk¹, Etta Balo⁶, Jason Frerichs³, Nick Fosheim²

Tennessee: Adam Tipton³, Becky Dykes², Bonnie Fakes⁶, Chris Cherry², David Erwin⁴, Jessica Hartle¹, John David Boreing⁵, Mark King¹, Matthew McBride³, Meagan Mangrum³, Michael Coley⁶, Sarah Jobe⁴

Texas: Alexis Reed³, Andrew Kramer⁴, Ansen Pond⁶, Austin Hawkins⁵, Ben Walker³, Blaze Currie⁴, Brandi Christi³, Brandon Strey², Breanne Pritchard⁶, Bryan Agado², Chance Barrett⁶, Courtney Cauer⁴, Derek Dunlap⁶, Eric Quisenberry⁵, Garrett Kleman⁴, Jamin Roller², Jarrat Calvert⁴, Jason McKnight¹, JD McLeod⁴, Jeffery Choate², Jenne Canon⁴, Jeremy Smith², Joe Barbour³, JP Parkerson⁵, Julian Marta⁴, Kacey Vandaveer¹, Kaci Foote⁵, Kaela Steubing⁶, Kasey Fuchs¹, Kate Farris², Kyla Arendt², Kyle Anderson³, Kyle Gilliam¹, Kyle Shipley⁶, Lenzi Barthold¹, Logan West¹, Marcus Arnold⁶, Megan Shearrer⁴, Micah Jenkins⁵, Monica Lewis⁵, Phillip Hedtke⁵, Rachel Fikes², Robert Henson¹, Sammie Zahradek⁵, Sheila Anders⁵, Tiffany McCann³, Tim Ginn³, Trace Jacoby¹, Travis Edds³, Tyler Sullins⁶

Utah: Addison Hicken³, Allison Lang⁴, Dusty Ercanbrack¹, Malcolm Rose², Melissa Hallam⁵

Vermont: Amanda Matison¹, Tracy Nisun⁴



Student leaders weighed many points of view on each issue before voting.

Virginia: Allen Heishman⁶, Callie McIntyre², Christy Huffman⁵, Elizabeth Stout⁶, Katie Dews⁵, Kent Branner¹, Laurel Alexander¹, Tiffanie Walters³, Timothy Shipe⁴

Washington: Braden Borchers⁴, Bre Trenary³, Carey Smithingell⁴, Greg Reilly¹, Jacob Bredstrand⁶, Kevin Faw⁵, Mallory Beale², Ricky Adams³

West Virginia: Annie Hall⁴, Brittnee Richie¹, Chris Livengood⁵, Jonathan Pinson⁶, Keith Rice², Veronica Milliken³

Wisconsin: Amanda Eberle³, Antonette Guider⁶, Brandon Hager¹, Dani Raether⁴, Danielle Russell², Gena Polzin⁵, Josh Duley¹, Katie Klessig⁵, Kelsey Murphy⁴, Michelle Rudolph³, Nicole Schmidt¹, Sara Medick⁶, Tyler Sailsbery⁶

Wyoming: Brendan Thoman⁵, Clayton Elliott¹, Donovan Buckman²

¹ = Creation of Bi-cameral (House and Senate) Delegate Assembly Issue Committee

² = Clarification on FFA Membership Requirements Issue Committee

³ = Improvement of Official Dress at National Convention Issue Committee

⁴ = Change Reporter's Part in Opening Ceremonies Issue Committee

⁵ = Development of a National Service Project Issue Committee

⁶ = Increase Non-Traditional Student Enrollment Issue Committee



Summary of 77th National FFA Convention Delegate Session Minutes



Delegate Business Session #1
October 27, 2004, 1:30-3:15 pm
Presiding Officer: Javier Moreno

- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Ceremonies
- III. Introduction of Special Guests
- IV. Approval of 2003 National FFA Convention Minutes
- V. Officer Reports
- VI. Committee Reports

Issue Committees

(issues identified at 2004 State Presidents' Conference from state nominations)

- 1: Creation of Bi-Cameral Delegate Assembly Committee
Approved by majority vote
- 2: Clarification on FFA Membership Requirements Committee
Approved by majority vote
- 3: Improvement of Official Dress at National Convention Committee
Approved by majority vote
- 4: Change of the Reporter's Part in Opening Ceremonies Committee
Approved by majority vote

Recess

Delegate Business Session 2
October 28, 2004, 9:30-10:30 pm
Presiding Officer: Javier Moreno

- VI. Committee Reports (resumed)
 - 5: National Service Project Committee
Approved by majority vote
 - 6: Increase Non-Traditional Student Enrollment
Approved by majority vote

Standing Committees

The Auditing, Program of Activities and Nominating Committee Reports were each approved by majority vote and without discussion.

Recess

Delegate Business Session 3
October 29, 2004, 9:30-10:30 pm
Presiding Officer: Javier Moreno

- VII. New Business - Proposed Amendments
 - 1: CONSTITUTION – ARTICLE V, SECTION B
Amend Article V, Section B by substituting "6" for "7".
Failed 2/3-majority vote (204/235)
 - 2: CONSTITUTION – ARTICLE V, SECTION D
Amend Article V, Section D – Collegiate

Membership by inserting, "or have an interest in the future welfare of the agriculture industry" following the word "agriculture" in the fifth line.

Approved by 2/3-majority vote (424/32)

- 3: CONSTITUTION – ARTICLE XII, SECTION B
Amend Article XII, Section B by adding the following words at the end of Section B, "except for proposed amendments to the Constitution and/or Bylaws meeting the requirements outlined in Article XVII."

Approved by 2/3-majority vote (375/78)

- 4: CONSTITUTION – ARTICLE XVII
Amend Article XVII, Amendments, by dividing the Article into three sections, with "Section A" defining the submission of amendments; "Section B" defining the adoption of amendments; and "Section C" the precedence of the Bylaws and Constitution.
Approved by 2/3-majority vote (voice vote)

- 5: CONSTITUTION – ARTICLE XVII
Amend Article XVII, Amendments, by striking the words "shall require a" and insert the words "may be adopted by a two-thirds" prior to the words majority vote of the official delegates at the national FFA convention in sentence six.
Failed 2/3-majority vote (60/397)

- 6: CONSTITUTION – ARTICLE XVII
Amend the voting process by which amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by inserting "and ratification by a majority of the state associations with official delegates" prior to the words "at the National FFA Convention" in sentence five and six of Article XVII of the National FFA Constitution.
Failed 2/3-majority vote (216/227)

VIII. New Business - Items Not on the Agenda

The delegate assembly approved no items of business, not already on the agenda, for consideration.

VIII. New Business - Items Not on the Agenda

Recess

Delegate Business Session 4
October 30, 2004, 4:15-5:00 pm
Presiding Officer: Javier Moreno

- IX. Standing Committee Report - Nominating Committee
Approved by majority vote

- X. Installation of 2004-2005 National FFA Officers

- XI. Meeting Adjourned

(NOTE: The complete version of the delegate session minutes are housed in the National FFA Organization archives.)

Committee Reports

Issue Committee #1: Creation of Bi-Cameral Delegate Assembly

Whereas, The committee carefully and deliberately analyzed the effects of proposing a Bi-Cameral legislative body, after numerous rounds of discussion and debate the Bi-Cameral legislative committee has come to a recommendation that we feel is the best for the National FFA Organization.

Be it resolved that the Creation of Bi-Cameral Delegate Assembly Committee recommends the following:

The members of the Bi-Cameral Delegate Assembly committee recommend that we vote “no” on the creation of a Bi-Cameral legislative body, at the 77th National FFA Convention.

On behalf of committee members, this report respectfully submitted October 27, 2004, by:

Committee Chair: Tyson Brown of Colorado

This committee recommendation passed by vote of the committee.

Witnessed by committee secretaries: Matt Jakubik, Michigan
Theresa M. Sandholm, New Hampshire



Delegates weigh the pros and cons carefully before submitting a vote.

Committee Reports



Issue Committee #2: Clarification on FFA Membership Requirements

Whereas, The requirements to obtain and continue membership in the FFA, as it relates to Supervised Agricultural Experiences, public/non-public schools and enrollment in agriculture classes needs to be more clearly defined:

Be it resolved that the Clarification on FFA Membership Requirements Committee recommends the following:

1. That, to be an FFA member, a student must maintain an SAE supervised by a certified agricultural education teacher.
2. That to obtain membership in the FFA a home-school, parochial school and/or private school student should be enrolled in an agricultural education course taught by a certified agricultural education instructor as determined by the respective state.



Be it further resolved:

That the National FFA Board of Directors develop an amendment to Article V, Section B of the National FFA Constitution reflecting these recommendations which will be presented to the 78th National FFA Convention delegates.

On behalf of committee members, this report respectfully submitted October 27, 2004, by:

Committee Chair: Ginger Goodan of New Mexico

Committee Vice Chair: Cliff Dolbeare of Illinois

This committee recommendation passed by unanimous vote of the committee.

Witnessed by committee secretaries: Callie McIntyre of Virginia
Adriana Melendez of Puerto Rico
Cara Soper of Minnesota

Committee Reports

Issue Committee #3: Improvement of Official Dress at National Convention

Whereas, The committee believes the proper use of official dress at convention should be encouraged, promoted and supported.

Be it resolved that the Improvement of Official Dress at National Convention Committee recommends the following:

1. Send information regarding proper Official Dress to advisors on attractive, colorful flyers, and/or pamphlets with their National Convention planning guide. This should, in turn, be distributed to members attending National Convention.
2. Have National FFA sell a more diverse selection of official dress items in the FFA Unlimited Catalog and on the website, as well as sell official dress package deals at national convention and throughout the year.
3. More advertisement of official dress through various means (i.e. FFA New Horizons, posters, commercials, RFD-TV, etc)
4. Create an incentive program for proper Official Dress. The rewards for this program would come as gifts or donations from sponsors, associations and people supporting FFA.
5. Add \$1.00 to each FFA Jacket to fund recommendation #3.
6. Compile and distribute proper official dress requirements and innovative ideas to inspire members to comply with Official Dress to all colleges and universities that have agricultural education programs.

On behalf of committee members, this report respectfully submitted October 27, 2004, by:
Committee Chair: Mike Woods of Pennsylvania

This committee recommendation passed by majority vote of the committee.

Witnessed by committee secretaries: Lauren Gemar of Nebraska
Brandi Christie of Texas



Delegates anxiously await the results of a vote on a hotly-debated issue.

Committee Reports

Issue Committee #4: Change of the Reporter's Part in Opening Ceremonies

Whereas,

- Membership in the Virgin Islands is drastically fluctuating,
- Currently only one chapter exists within the Virgin Islands,
- Delegates could see future progress and growth within the association,

Be it resolved that the Change of the Reporter's Part in Opening Ceremonies Committee recommends the following:

1. No change is currently adopted within opening ceremonies.
2. A committee must be established to monitor the progress of the Virgin Islands association to determine if it merits a future change.

On behalf of committee members, this report respectfully submitted October 27, 2004, by:

Committee Chair: Casey Simpson of Arkansas

This committee recommendation passed by 43/21 vote of the committee.

Witnessed by committee secretaries: Nicole Curran of Delaware
Kacy Baugher of Illinois



Much like the framers of the U.S. Constitution, delegates must discuss issues at length and seek compromise.

Committee Reports

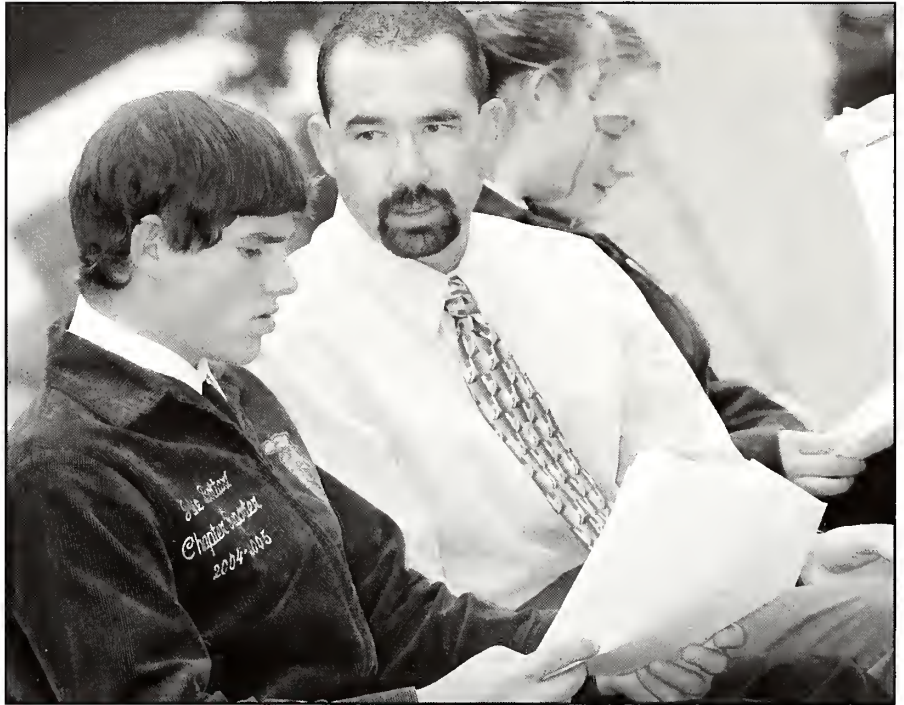
Issue Committee #5: National Service Project

Whereas,

1. The FFA Motto states, "Living to Serve."
2. The FFA Creed states, "In less need for charity and more of it when needed...I can exert an influence in my home and community."
3. The community supports the FFA through time and money. We want to show our appreciation and give that support back. A national service project allows this to occur.
4. Public Law 81-740 states, "To develop character, train for useful citizenship, and foster patriotism."
5. The FFA Mission includes the development of personal growth.
6. The cross section of the ear of corn, symbolizes unity in our organization, a National Service Project would show unity in our ambition to serve.

Be it resolved that the National Service Project Committee recommends the following:

1. The National FFA Organization should implement a non-mandated national service project.
2. The National Service Project should not be a competitive activity but should receive recognition.
3. A committee chosen by the National Board of Directors including two members of leadership from the National Service Project Committee for the first year to determine the annual theme and timeframe for the duration of the National Service Project each year.



Service is one of FFA's fundamental values.

On behalf of committee members, this report respectfully submitted October 27, 2004, by:

Committee Chair: Amy Plummer of Montana

This committee recommendation passed by majority vote of the committee.

Witnessed by committee secretaries: Shawna Allen of Oklahoma
Gena Polzin of Wisconsin

Committee Reports



Issue Committee #6: Increase Non-Traditional Student Enrollment

Whereas, The committee believes there are certain strategic and programmatic areas in which National FFA can increase the recruitment and retention of non-traditional students and that the identification of the non-traditional students should be a continuous focus of the National FFA. At a minimum, the committee recommends the following:

Be it resolved that the Increase Non-Traditional Student Enrollment Committee recommends the following:

-That national FFA organization implements the following in reference to recruitment and retainment of non-traditional students:

1. Utilize media
 - a. place New Horizons magazines in non-traditional areas (i.e.: hospitals, businesses, schools)
 - b. use or attain possible non-traditional TV\radio\or print ads for FFA
 - c. sell apparel in places such as Wal-Mart
 - d. national FFA emblem on signs, billboards and buses in cities
2. Create a "toolbox\toolkit"
 - a. create an advisor's trouble-shooting guide that explains how to deal with the different barriers that non-traditional students may encounter (i.e.: cultural, special needs, financial, religious, urban, and advanced students)
 - b. create a book containing ideas and activities that chapters can use to increase membership
3. Awards\ Diversification
 - a. publicize H.O. Sargent Award more
 - b. offer incentives for non-traditional student enrollment
 - c. research developing new and diverse science and technology based CDE's
4. Curriculum and standards
 - a. promote awareness of scholarship opportunities for college
 - b. encourage advisors\teachers to find and teach curriculum beneficial to cultural surroundings
 - c. broaden the meaning of agriscience classes
 - d. teacher in-services to bridge the gap between traditional teachers and non-traditional students
 - e. list serve\data base\message board by email so teachers can ask questions
 - f. encourage the implementation of college prep agricultural courses into agriculture education.
5. Awareness of FFA\Agriculture\stereotypes
 - a. encourage FFA involvement with different vocational/agricultural education classes
 - b. programs that would combine traditional and nontraditional students
 - c. materials provided to counselors and administrators such as videos and pamphlets
 - d. provide state officer with materials to present to advisors and students
 - e. add national staff to serve as traveling advocate for FFA\agriculture for non-traditional students in targeted areas
 - f. provide a nationwide video describing the diversity of agriculture on the Internet
 - g. target parents to encourage students to join
6. Researching non-traditional membership
 - a. define non-traditional membership
 - b. determine barriers of non-traditional members via survey, etc.
 - c. this committee should update the above information every other convention

As well as to refer the recruitment and retainment of non-traditional students to a strategic planning committee to look into the following:

On behalf of committee members, this report respectfully submitted October 27, 2004, by:
Committee Chair: Matt Metzger of Indiana

This committee recommendation passed by majority vote of the committee.

Witnessed by committee secretaries: Theresa Feighery of Alaska
Allen Heishman of Virginia

Committee Reports



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

The nominating committee has the difficult task of choosing six national officers from among so many outstanding candidates.

Nominating Committee

Stephen Peterson, Montana, Chair
 Wade Foster, Oregon, Vice Chair
 Rich Chappell, Illinois
 Jesse Eller, California
 Travis Jett, Oklahoma
 Becky Lambert, South Dakota
 Justin Lowe, North Carolina
 Bud Mathews, Maryland
 Kristy Mayo, Mississippi



We, the nominating committee, have given careful and deliberate consideration to all applicants running for a national office. The committee nominates the following slate of candidates to the delegates at the 77th National FFA Convention to serve as national officers for the year 2004-2005.

Central Region Vice President:
 Justine Sterling, Kansas

Eastern Region Vice President:
 Jay Kelley, Illinois

Southern Region Vice President:
 Rachael McCall, Georgia

Western Region Vice President:
 Brian Hogue, Arizona

National Secretary:
 Emily Horton, Wyoming

National President:
 Jackie Mundt, Wisconsin



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

The new national officers joined together for the first time after the committee's recommendations were read.

Retiring Address, cont.

Moreno
from page 39

forget that it is much easier to deal with detours when we have a family and friends that are willing to support us.

Many of you may have been down tough detours before. You may even be going through a tough detour right now! One of the advantages you have is that you are a part of the greatest student organization in the world. If you are an active member of the FFA, chances are that at some point you are going to go through a detour. Maybe you won't get first place in public speaking, livestock judging, or parliamentary procedure. One way or another, some time you will fail in the FFA.

But don't panic – there's good news! When facing failure Denis Waitley said, "Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end. Failure is something we can avoid only by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing."

Just like I received the support of so many in this great organization, you can receive the support you need to succeed every time you face a detour!

I have to believe that today I'm better able to serve those around me because of the detour I've taken this year. I've learned that patience can be our best friend, that we must be compassionate of those who need our help, and that love can be our greatest gift. FFA members and friends, know that some rough roads lead to the right places, and no matter how tough your detour may be, you have the power to prevail.

Knapke
from page 45

ferently, to live better, to be better.

Our generation is referred to as the "Millennial Generation." We are the largest generation ever to be born into this world, even larger than the "Baby Boomers." By the end of this year, there will be 76 million of us. We are expected to be the longest-living, best-educated generation ever.

Expectations have been set that our generation will do "great things." Suddenly then, it becomes our responsibility to define what "great things" really are. Mother Teresa said some profound things during her amazing life here on Earth. Once she said, "In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love. It is not the magnitude of our actions but the amount of love that is put into them that matters."

Choose wisely what you will define as great things.

I read a poem one evening from a book entitled, "Guerrillas of Grace." Listen close—these words say so much. "Sometimes Lord, it just seems to be too much: too much violence, pain, fear; too much standing alone; too much of demands and problems; too much of broken dreams and broken lives; too much of war and slums and dying; too much of greed... and quarrels; ...too much of senseless words, turned-away backs and ...silence; ...too much confusion, and ...darkness, Lord, too much of cruelty and selfishness and indifference... Or is it too little, too little of compassion, too little of courage, of daring, of persistence, of sacrifice, ...of humility; too little of kindness?"

FFA members and guests, I look into this crowd, and I see hope. I believe we can be the answer to the "too little's" of our world, but if we're going to be, then it's going to be up to us, right here, right now, with a commitment in our hearts from you and me.

Let's choose compassion, not indifference. Choose kindness, not selfishness. Choose acceptance, not ignorance. Choose forgiveness, not hatred. Choose peace, not vengeance.

Let's let the Sarahs and strangers into our lives. Let's reach out to the ones who need us. Let's open our hearts so we can be the answer to a better tomorrow through our acceptance and our selflessness.

Our world is better off for all that we let in.

Rasmussen
from page 47

selves. What will your mark be when you are no longer here? How will the generations who will follow you know that you have graced this planet? What acts of courage and contribution will you engage in that will add value not only to your life but also to the lives of those around you? How will anyone know that you lived with a purpose?

When we know our purpose we can have more life. We all can have more life when we serve.

So whether you're a student, a leader, an athlete, a parent, a businessperson, a teacher, or simply a gate girl, live your life fueled with a purpose, a purpose to serve. And that, ladies and gentlemen, will give us all a little more life!

Hogan
from page 49

But we can't stop there; most importantly we have to stand tall so that others have someone to look up to. We have to leave here today and go find that one person who was like me five years ago and needs some direction in their life and a place to belong. If you're an FFA member, go out and find that one person who you pass by in the hall and don't say a word to and invite them to an FFA meeting. If you're an ag teacher, invite them to join an ag class. If you're a parent or supporter, invite that young person over to your house for dinner and be a role model for them. There are too many times that we don't stand tall for others, and we forget to reach out and take time out of our day to change another's.

You know we live in a world full of opportunity and heartbreak as well. I believe the greatest thing about this world is that it's what you make of it. You have the power to leave here this week and change the world. You could be raised around drugs, poverty, alcohol and all the other ills of the world, but you can still go out and change your life and make a difference. We need real people, though.

We need real people like Pat Tillman who stand true to what they believe; people who don't do what's popular but do what's right; people who aren't afraid to fight for their country or stand up for what's right even if every person around them disagrees.

We need real people who can stand strong in times of difficulty; people who don't use the difficulties in their

lives as excuses, but use them as opportunities to learn and make a difference.

We need real people who can stand tall so that others have someone to look up to as a hero; people who don't pass by the kid in the hall who needs a friend or a place to belong; people who seek others to learn from and aren't afraid to follow a time or two.

FFA members and guests, we live in a real world, we face real problems and need real solutions. Will you be real people?

Thank you and God Bless!

Windham from page 39

begin when we start to accept that change is inevitable. It doesn't matter if it's good or bad, things happen in our lives that we cannot control.

Remember, we can choose how change will affect us because of our attitudes. Make a conscious effort to view change as an opportunity rather than a difficulty.

Finally, every time you change your thoughts or behavior, it matters. No change is spare, and it does add up over time into developing you into the person that you are becoming.

When the gavel is tapped to close this session and you get up out of your seats to begin walking away with your fellow members, decide that you will change a negative attitude or you will stop taking the easy way out and you will be an original thinker. I dare you to uncover your hidden power and potential. Starting right now, FFA members, you can change your world by changing yourself.

Convention Candids



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PHOTO BY EO ZURGA



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PHOTO BY JASON GEORGE



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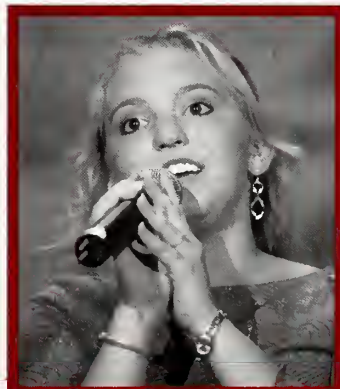


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PHOTO BY ED ZURGA



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER



PHOTO BY JASON DENICE

2004-2005 National FFA Officer Team



Jackie Mundt

2004-2005 National FFA President
7770 Lincoln Rd.
Pittsville, WI 54466
Voice mail: 317-802-4341
E-mail: jmundt@ffa.org

Age: 19

FFA Chapter: Pittsville FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Agricultural sales

State FFA Office: 2003-2004 Wisconsin Vice-President

High School Activities: Discussion meet, creed speaking, extemporaneous public speaking

College and Major: University of Wisconsin, Agricultural Economics

College Activities: Student Senate, Campus Community Players Theater, Choir

Career Goal: To become an agricultural lobbyist.



Emily Horton

2004-2005 National FFA Secretary
144 North Muddy Rd.
Riverton, WY 82501
Voice mail: 317-802-4346
E-mail: ehorton@ffa.org

Age: 20

FFA Chapter: Shoshoni FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Beef production, diversified crop production and home and community development

State FFA Office: 2002-2003 Wyoming Treasurer

High School Activities: Wyoming star farmer, beef proficiency, DeKalb award

College and Major: University of Wyoming, Agricultural Business with an International emphasis

College Activities: Wyoming Board of Agriculture Youth Advisory Committee, Homcoming Committee Co-Chair, Ag Ambassador

Career Goal: To work as an agricultural marketing executive in international agriculture, while owning and operating a heifer development center.



Jay Kelley

2004-2005 National FFA Eastern Region Vice President
20937 North Stephanie Ct.
Chillicothe, IL 61523
Voice mail: 317-802-4343
E-mail: jkelley@ffa.org

Age: 21

FFA Chapter: Princeville FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Beef production, feed and grain production, oilcrop production and wildlife management

State FFA Office: 2002-2003 Illinois President

High School Activities: Star greenhand, proficiency award, Chapter FFA Leadership award

College and Major: University of Illinois – Champaign/Urbana, Agribusiness Markets and Management

College Activities: Student Advancement Committee, ExplorACES Chair, ACES Council

Career Goal: To excel in a career serving the agricultural industry.



Justine Sterling

2004-2005 National FFA Central Region Vice President
100 Kiowa Ave.
Hardtner, KS 67057
Voice mail: 317-802-4243
E-mail: jsterling@ffa.org

Age: 20

FFA Chapter: South Barber FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Agricultural sales and agricultural placement

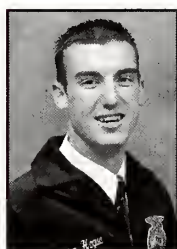
State FFA Office: 2003-2004 Kansas President

High School Activities: Commitment to Agriculture Scholarship, prepared public speaking, agronomy

College and Major: Kansas State University, Agricultural Communications

College Activities: KSU Student Alumni Board, College of Agriculture Ambassadors, Chi Omega

Career Goal: To promote and influence young people's interest in agriculture at the university level.



Brian Hogue

2004-2005 National FFA Western Region Vice President
370 North Sunset Strip
Willcox, AZ 85643
Voice mail: 317-802-4345
E-mail: bhogue@ffa.org

Age: 20

FFA Chapter: Wilcox FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Beef production and fruit and vegetable production

State FFA Office: 2002-2003 Arizona President

High School Activities: Star greenhand, Dekalb award, New Century Farmer

College and Major: Arizona State University, Polytechnic Campus; Agribusiness Management

College Activities: FarmHouse Fraternity, Student General Assembly Senator, College Republicans

Career Goal: To serve the agricultural industry as a public official and farmer.



Rachael McCall

2004-2005 National FFA Southern Region Vice President
2716 Christian Home Rd.
Rochelle, GA 31079
Voice mail: 317-802-4344
E-mail: rmccall@ffa.org

Age: 19

FFA Chapter: Wilcox County FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Beef production and dairy production

State FFA Office: 2002-2003 Georgia South Region Vice President

High School Activities: Dairy production proficiency, job interview, extemporaneous public speaking

College and Major: University of Georgia, Agricultural Economics

College Activities: Agricultural Economics Club, Wesley Foundation, 5K Runs

Career Goal: To pursue a career in either agricultural sales or law.



The FFA Mission: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

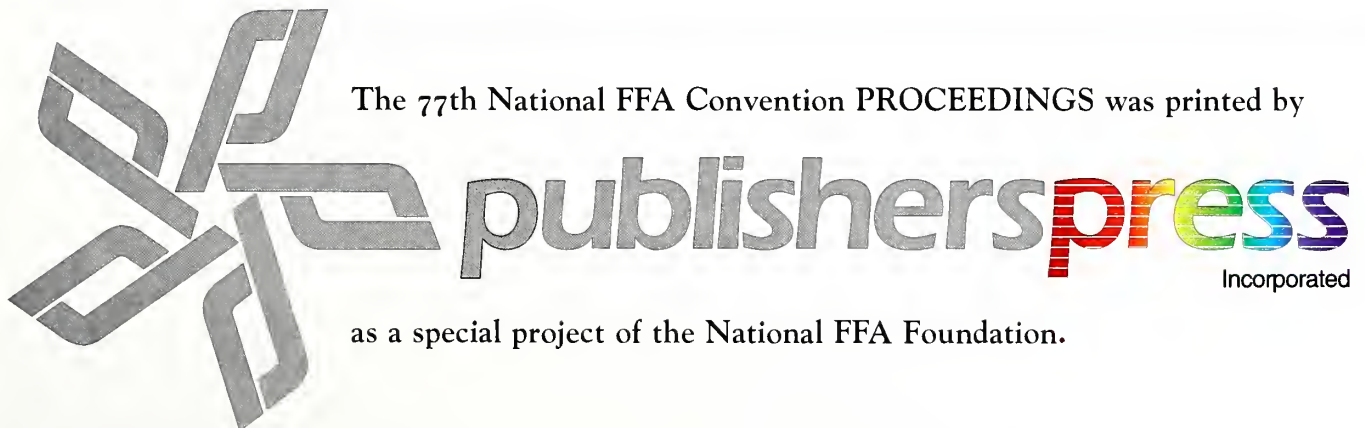
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Margie Graber
FFA member 1986-1991

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